

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second-Class Matter at the New York Post Office, November 7, 1898, by Frank Tousey.

No. 438.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 24, 1906.

Price 5 Cents.

TOM BARRY OF BARRINGTON; OR, THE HERO OF N°4. *By Ex FIRE-CHIEF WARDEN.*



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By EX-FIRE-CHIEF WARDEN.

CHAPTER I.

THE RESCUE OF THE BELLE OF BARRINGTON.

The bustling little city of Barrington, not a thousand miles from New York, had quite a number of manufacturing establishments, whose offices and salesrooms were down in the metropolis. The majority of the residents were workers in the various mills—children of poverty. Yet there was a great deal of wealth in the town, and a good many wealthy families lived there. Like all other manufacturing towns there was a wide gulf between the families of the mill workers and the mill owners—in a social sense. It is the same all over the world, and will continue to be so as long as the world stands and people live in it. Barrington was no exception to the rule, and no one there seemed to expect anything else.

In matters of business it was different. There rich and poor jostled each other in the battle for money or bread. The rich man must give employment to the poor in order to add to his bank account. The poor man must work for the rich to get the means wherewith to keep the wolf from his door—hence both had interests in common, and yet each rarely took note of the other.

Barrington had four fire companies. One was made up of the well-to-do young men of the town. The other three of the brawny sons of toil. No. 1 was the aristocratic company, and was the pet of the society people. The engine was the finest that money could buy, and was kept in sumptuous quarters, with a clubroom upstairs for the use of the members. They met there every evening as a social club, and had servants employed to look after their comfort. Yet, when an alarm was sounded they responded quickly and held their own against any of the other three.

No. 2 was made up of iron workers—brawny fellows, who were familiar with fire in their daily toil. They were good firemen, and had little fear of the flames.

No. 3 was made up of workers in the great silk mills. They had an old steamer that had seen much service; but they managed to keep her going, and could throw a stream as far as the best of them.

No. 4 was an old hand engine which had been discarded by No. 1, and the boys in the various shops along the river front had taken it, more for their own amusement than otherwise, and had used it a year before the city recognized them as a fire company. They had done such splendid work at a time when the town was threatened with a terrible conflagration that the fire marshal, or chief, invited them to enter the fire department as engine No. 4. They did so, and an old vacant building was rented by the city for their use.

The quarters were rough and uninviting, but the boys were not proud or hard to please. They had a place to meet, and they were "firemen," and so they were happy.

One very dark night, when high winds were blowing, a fire broke out in the private residence of Judge Macomb, one of the wealthiest men in the town. The alarm was sounded as soon as the fire was discovered, and Nos. 2 and 3 promptly responded, it being in their section. Only another call would bring out the others. The high wind, though, caused the flames to envelop the whole house in such a short space of time that the family and all the help were in imminent danger of being consumed, hence the second alarm was given.

Though it was midnight, hundreds of people hurried to the spot. Judge Macomb escaped by leaping from a window, badly injuring one leg. His wife leaped after him and was caught in the arms of a brawny iron worker, a member of No. 2. A servant girl and the young daughter of the family were saved by the heroic efforts of the members of No. 1. By that time flames were bulging from every window.

Suddenly a youth among the spectators sung out:

"There's a woman up there in that second-story corner room!"

Everybody looked up. Great fiery tongues of flame protruded from the window.

"Minnie! Minnie! Oh, my child is still up there!" screamed Mrs. Macomb. "Save her! Oh, save her!"

Minnie Macomb was the belle of Barrington. Everybody knew her either by sight or reputation, for she was the very queen of Barrington society.

The firemen looked up at the window and shook their heads. The men of No. 1 were at the foot of the ladder. One started up, but a long fiery tongue reached down and cut off part of

his mustache. He quickly retreated and landed among his comrades, half blinded.

Just then the figure of a young woman was seen at the window for one brief moment—then she sank down out of sight, and a cry of horror went up from the crowd. All this happened within ten seconds after the young man in the crowd called attention to the young woman up there.

When the fireman ran back down the ladder, not daring to make the effort to save her, the youth bounded forward with the yell of:

"Make way there, you cowards!"

He reached the ladder and started up, when two firemen seized him.

Quick as a flash he knocked them both down and then ran up to the window. A huge tongue of flame reached out to welcome him. He pulled his slouch hat well down over his eyes and leaned over into the window.

"The fellow will be roasted!" cried the foreman of No. 1.

"He can't save her, and will perish himself!" cried another.

"Look! Look!" cried a hundred voices, as he lifted the form of the young woman out of the window, tucked her under his right arm and began the descent.

The crowd yelled encouragement to him. She was in her night dress and it was ablaze in a dozen places. Of course she was unconscious and badly burned. His coat and hat were on fire, too. But he descended with a celerity that astonished even the old firemen, and as soon as he was relieved of his burden he threw away the hat and coat.

Firemen and spectators sprang forward to grasp his hand in congratulations.

No one seemed to know who he was. He was a sturdy youth of about eighteen, with a light in his eyes that told of an indomitable spirit that had been aroused by the emergency.

"Better attend to the fire," he said to the firemen around him. "If it gets hold of the next house there you will have a deal of trouble with it."

Just then the fire chief himself called out to the firemen to turn their attention to the next house, which the flames were trying to reach. They very promptly obeyed, and two streams were turned on, while two more continued to battle with the flames.

In the meantime the young lady who had been so near to a horrible death had been conveyed to one of the residences across the street, where the rest of the family had gone, and physicians called in. The young man who saved her life disappeared in the crowd, bareheaded and coatless.

By almost superhuman efforts the fire was kept in bounds, and the many beautiful residences on the street saved. It was learned the next day that a servant girl, who slept on the top floor, had perished in the fire. But everywhere in the town people asked each other:

"Who was the young man who saved Minnie Macomb's life?"

But nobody seemed to know.

The morning papers had glowing accounts of the marvelous rescue—and two aristocratic young members of Fire Company No. 1 had blackened optics to show in proof of the fact that he was one well able to save or take life.

One of the young men, Rudolph Curtis, said to the fire chief:

"I am one of Miss Macomb's many admirers, and would have given my life to save her; but when I looked up at that window and saw nothing but red flames there, I was fully persuaded that she was dead, hence it was my duty to prevent another life being sacrificed in a useless effort. That is why I tried to prevent that young fellow from going up there. He wasn't a fireman, and any fireman would have tried to do it.

But I am glad he went up in spite of us, even if he did knock me down. I don't care to run up against his fist again," and he laid a hand tenderly over his blackened optic as he spoke.

Though badly hurt himself, Judge Macomb sent for the fire chief and asked him to find out who the young man was. The chief said he was trying to do so, but had not found any one who knew him.

At last a little newsboy, Benny Hurd by name, said in the presence of an officer that he knew the fellow.

"He hasn't been here but a few days," Benny said. "He is stopping at Widow Morrison's on Elm street, and is looking for work."

"Well, show me where Widow Morrison lives," said the officer, "and I'll treat to a pint of peanuts."

"I'm your kid," said Benny. "Come ahead," and Benny led the way down the street to the little boarding-house kept by the Widow Morrison.

The officer knocked and the widow's pretty seventeen-year-old daughter Maggie opened the door. She seemed to be quite astonished when she saw his uniform.

"I am looking for the young man who was at the fire last night," the officer said to her.

"What's he done?" she asked.

"Why, he saved the life of a young lady who was just burning up," he answered.

"And you want to arrest him for that?" she asked, her eyes opening wide in amazement.

"Arrest nothing," he laughed. "We have been told to find him, for the fire chief and everybody else wants to see and know him. Is he here?"

"Yes, sir. Come in," and the officer went in and Benny waited outside for his pint of peanuts. In the sitting-room the officer waited for Mrs. Morrison to come in, as Maggie had to see her and tell her what he wanted. The widow was a good, motherly soul, who had a hard struggle to support herself and daughter by keeping a little boarding-house for mechanics.

"His name is Tom Barry," she said to the officer. "He came here a week ago in search of work, with just one dollar in his pocket and no clothes save what he has on his back. He told me his condition, and asked me to trust him for one week, and I have done so, for he has an honest, frank way about him that makes me believe in him. But he has not been able to find work, and now he is without a coat or hat, and is pretty badly burned about the neck and on one of his hands."

"Where is he from?"

"He says he came from Albany here, but I am sure it is not his home. He is well educated and a good talker."

"May I see him?"

"Why, yes, if he has no objection," and she arose and went upstairs to a little room where the young man was lying on a bed.

He had just dressed his hurts. She told him that a man downstairs had come to see him, and advised him to go down and see what he wanted.

"He may be able to do something for you," she said.

He went down with her, and the officer rose to his feet and bowed.

"You wish to see me?"

"The chief of police instructed us all to find out who it was that performed such a heroic deed last night. A little newsboy told me you lived here, and I have called to see you. I hear you are in search of work?"

"Yes, I came here expecting to find something to do."

"Well, stay here and we'll see that you get work."

CHAPTER II.

TOM BARRY JOINS NO. 4.

"I am sorry you were hurt," Mrs. Morrison said to young Barry, when the officer was gone. "It may be a lucky thing for you that you went to that fire."

"It was lucky for the young lady, at any rate," he replied.

"Your saving her may open the way to employment of some kind."

"I hope so, for I am now without a coat or hat."

"Yes, and as soon as he hears of it, Judge Macomb will send you all the hats and coats you want. He is very rich and, I have heard, very generous to the poor."

"Well, I don't want any charity. All I want is employment, and I can take care of myself."

"But it would not be charity to make good your loss."

"No, of course not. I was speaking of it in a general way."

Two hours later a knock at the door of the cottage caused Mrs. Morrison to drop her work in the kitchen and run to the front. A tall, well-dressed, middle-aged man stood there.

"Is Mr. Barry in?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"I wish to see him."

"Come in and I'll call him down."

He took a seat in the neat little sitting-room, while the widow called Barry down from the foot of the stairs. He came down and the man rose to his feet, bowed and extended his hand, saying:

"My name is Walcott. I am Judge Macomb's law partner. I have come at his request to thank you in his name for saving the life of his daughter at the fire last night. He is too badly hurt to call in person."

"How is the young lady, sir?"

"Pretty badly burned and suffering a great deal. Burns are always painful, you know."

"Yes, very. I am glad it is no worse with either of us."

"I hear that you lost your hat and coat at the fire?"

"Yes, sir."

"You will let the judge make the loss good to you, of course?"

"Yes, if he wishes to do so. The truth is, I am away from home with no change of clothes with me, otherwise I would accept them."

"A clothier will call to take your measure and send the things to you. Judge Macomb will call on you in person as soon as he is able."

"I shall be glad to meet him, but tell him to put himself to no trouble on my account. The greatest favor he can do me is to assist me in getting work. I am a cabinet-maker by trade, and a skilled workman."

"Ah! The judge is a stockholder in one of the largest establishments of that kind in the city. He will gladly find a place for you."

"But he must not displace another to do so. I am not that kind of a man," and he shook his head.

"I'll tell him that. It speaks well for you, permit me to say."

"I have no one to take care of but myself. Some other might have a mother or wife depending on him."

"Yes, I know. Tell me, do you need any medical attendance for your burns?"

"No, sir. Mrs. Morrison dressed them for me. I believe she spent a dollar or so for lotions, which I will repay as soon as I can get work."

"Will you let me leave some money with you—from Judge Macomb? You know how men feel about such things."

"Yes, I think I do. If you will let it be understood that I may return it some day in the future I would be glad to get ten dollars. I can then settle with my landlady, who is really unable to let one owe her for board."

"Why, my dear sir, you can have a thousand if you wish it!" said the lawyer.

"It would take me a long time to repay that amount," he laughed, shaking his head. "I don't care to contract such a debt."

"But the judge thinks he owes you more than he can ever hope to pay."

"Yes, I understand. It's a father's love for his child, and quite different from a financial debt."

"Well, I must say you are quite different from all the people I have met," remarked the lawyer.

"I simply wish to preserve my self-respect, sir. I have much satisfaction in the thought that I saved the young lady's life. That I can enjoy to the fullest extent, and still more so when I hear that she has recovered from her hurts."

"Yes, yes; of course," and the visitor laid a bill under a book on the little table where Barry could see it. "I shall see that you get work at your trade, and that very speedily," and then he arose and extended his hand to Tom.

"I shall be able to work in a few days, when my hand has healed. It is very sore to-day."

"Take your time, my dear sir. One can't work when in pain—at least I can't."

"I have had to do so, and could again," said Barry, as he shook his hand.

The man left and Tom went to the little table to look at the bill which had been left there for him. It was a \$50 note. His eyes opened wide.

"He is generous indeed," he said to himself. "I'll pay a month's board and keep the balance for the doctor, if I have to send for him," and he went into the little kitchen where Mrs. Morrison was at work, told her just what had passed between the visitor and himself, and tendered her the bill, saying:

"Take out a month's board, or more, if you need it, and I'll keep the balance for the doctor. I may have to send for one."

"Thank you," said the widow. "I'll take one month's board and pay rent with it. I know you ought to have a doctor, for that is a bad burn on your neck."

She sent Maggie to have the bill changed, and Tom returned to his room.

The next day the chief of the fire department called to see him. He was a hearty, genial man, and young Barry enjoyed the visit very much, even though he was suffering a good deal from his burns. He said to Barry:

"We have a fire company in the city made up of young men about your own age. They have asked me to persuade you to join them."

"I was never in a fire company," said Barry.

"Nor were they till they joined—nor any other firemen, as for that matter. You have the stuff, though, that good firemen are made of. The boys of No. 4 have an old hand engine, which was the first ever owned by the city, and they are at a disadvantage as against the steamers. But they are brawny young fellows, and brave as lions. I think you could work with them in such a way as to make No. 4 the best company in Barrington."

"Thank you for the compliment," said Barry. "I'll join them as soon as I get to work."

A day or two later the foreman of the Barrington Cabinet Works called to see him, saying he had been sent to tell him there was a place for him in the shops.

"I won't take any other man's place," said Barry.

"You won't have to. We take on new men every week almost, and they come and go, the same as in any other large shop."

"Very well. I'll be able to get out inside of another week, I think."

"We shall be glad to have you with us. All our men are glad you are to be in our trade. Some like you for your rescue of the young lady; others for the beautiful decorations you put on the two dude firemen who got in your way that night. Lord, but you should see them! They show a mile off," and the foreman laughed as he made the remark. He shared the common feeling of workmen against the "dude" element in life.

Barry laughed, too, and said he did not mean to do anything save to put them out of his way. He had seen the young lady at the window and believed she could be saved. When he saw the fireman back out he could not resist the temptation to make the effort himself.

"Well, she owes you her life," said the foreman.

"I am glad she does, otherwise she would have perished."

Ten days later Young Barry was at work in the cabinet works. He wore a neat suit which had been sent to him by Judge Macomb's orders, and it fitted him well.

When he joined No. 4, the chief of the fire department went with him, and the boys received them both with cheers. The chief believed it incumbent on him to show some partiality to No. 4, because the members were the youngest firemen in the city, hence he made it a point to meet with them often to encourage them.

"I have come here this evening," he said, "to see my young friend Barry become one of you. I was so sure you would give him a cordial welcome I wanted to see you when you did it. I am satisfied, and any man in the world would be with the welcome you have given him. I want to see all of you shake hands with him and become his friends. He has the right sort of stuff in him and will make a good fireman."

The boys crowded around the chief and young Barry, shaking hands and asking questions.

Every member made his personal acquaintance. Hugh Dalton, the foreman of No. 4, offered to resign his place and let him have it.

"No, no!" Barry said: "I am no fireman. Let me serve my time with the rest of you. I can put on as many pounds pressure as any other in the company, and that's where I'll work."

The boys were more than pleased with him, and he with them. They spent two hours there, and then went to their homes for the night.

CHAPTER III.

A MARVELOUS FEAT.

Tom Barry was at work in the great Barrington Cabinet Works one day when a tall, portly man, wearing glasses and using a cane, as though a bit lame, came and stood by his bench as if to see him at work. He looked up at the stranger and bowed, but did not neglect his work. The man bowed also, and stood there in silence some five minutes gazing at him. Finally the latter said:

"Your name is Barry, is it not?"

"Yes, sir," Tom replied.

"My name is Macomb."

Tom looked up at him quickly and said:

"You are Judge Macomb?"

"Yes, I was once a judge."

"I am glad to see you, sir. I want to thank you for the position you have given me here."

"And I want to thank you, too," said the judge, extending his hand to him. "I can't thank you enough, but I will say to you that I'll be your friend through good and evil report and under all circumstances."

"Thank you a thousand times, sir," said Tom. "I hope you will never hear any evil report of me. I know how you feel, sir, but I'll never try to presume on what I did. I hope you and your daughter have both recovered from your injuries."

"Thank you. I am a little lame yet, and my daughter is still confined to her room. She desires to see you when she is able to do so."

"I shall be pleased to present myself whenever you tell me to do so, simply to please her, as well as to see her."

"Do you like your work here?"

"Very much, sir, and the pay is good. The tools are finer and better than any I have ever used, and that enables me to do better and finer work."

The foreman tells me you are a fine workman. I hope you will stay here and develop all your skill in the line of work you have to do."

"I hardly think I could ever wish to go elsewhere since circumstances have brought me such friends, and——"

He never finished the sentence. The great fire bell struck, and he stopped to catch the number of the district. It was in No. 4. district.

"I have joined a fire company, sir," he said, looking up at the judge.

"Do your duty," said the latter, and Tom threw off his apron and dashed out of the building at a breakneck speed. In half a minute he was at the quarters of the old hand engine. The boys donned helmets and shirt with lightning-like rapidity. On helmet and shirt front were No. 4 in white silk.

With a yell they dashed out of the old building, dragging No. 4 after them, and went roaring through the streets like an avalanche. It was in the middle of the afternoon, and many vehicles were on the streets. A carriage drawn by two spirited bays was coming from the opposite direction. A collision seemed imminent. The driver tried to turn out of the way, but the frightened steeds wheeled square around, turning the carriage over and making a wreck of it. In it was an elderly lady who screamed for help.

Tom left his place with the engine and ran to her assistance. He seized both horses by the bits and pushed them back on their haunches, as with the strength of a Samson. They tried to rear and plunge, but he held them down till two men ran up to aid him.

"Hold them!" he said, and then he dashed to the carriage and rescued the lady from the wreck, took her in his arms and ran into a drugstore with her, placed her in a chair, saying:

"There! You are out of danger now," and then wheeled and ran out again.

He was scarcely half a minute behind the other boys at the fire.

"Here, Barry!" cried the foreman. "There are children up in that second story! Quick, man! The building is a tinder box."

Tom ran up the ladder with the speed of a squirrel, and disappeared through the window, in the face of fiery blasts.

"By George, but that fellow doesn't know what danger is!" exclaimed the foreman of No. 2. "They are all dead in there by this time!"

Nearly two minutes passed, and that means a great deal in a fire in an old frame building like that one. People held

their breath. The flames roared and the fire engines puffed and rattled under the strain to which they were subjected.

Suddenly someone sung out:

"Look! There he is!"

He was climbing out of the window with a woman in his arms. He held her in front of him round the waist, and she held a baby in each arm.

"Oh, heavens, they will fall and be killed!" cried a voice below.

Their clothes were on fire.

"Throw water above 'em and let it fall in a shower on 'em!" cried Hugh Dalton, foreman of No. 4, to the nozzleman, and he did so. The water rained on them in a shower. Barry began to descend with his back to the ladder, a most dangerous and difficult feat. When halfway down he shook off his hat, and hung on to a rung with the back of his head, while he hugged the sides of the ladder with his feet. Then he slid gently down to the ground, where the firemen, cheering wildly, relieved him of his charge.

He had saved a mother and her two babes. He could not separate them. She clung to them with the deathless love of a mother, so he gathered her in his arms and made the attempt to save all three at once, or perish with them.

The chief of the fire department ran to him, grasped his hand and exclaimed:

"How did you do it?"

"I don't know—but I had to do it or leave 'em all up there!" he replied.

Womanlike, the mother fainted when she saw she was safe with her babes. But the babes were unhurt, while she and Tom got several burns. Several other rescues were made by Nos. 4 and 2 firemen. It was utterly impossible to save the building. It burned like a pile of straw. The hardest work the firemen had to do was to prevent the flames from spreading. That they succeeded in doing so was a wonder, for it was both dry and hot, and the buildings were all old frames in that block.

When the danger was past the firemen of No. 2 crowded round No. 4 and cheered Barry, who had gone upon the engine to help on the force crank.

"Hurrah for Barry!"

"How did you do it, Barry!"

"Hanged if I know!" he replied.

"I never saw such a feat before," said the fire chief.

"Are you hurt, Tom?" the foreman asked him.

"Got a few blisters, I guess," was the reply.

"Then let go there and attend to them," he ordered.

Tom let go and got down from the engine. Then they grasped his hands. No. 4 had won the honors, and the boys were proud of it. The old hand engine was to the front, and they vowed to keep her there.

"Go to your quarters, boys of No. 4," said the fire chief, "and No. 2 will see to keeping the debris wet."

They pulled the engine back to their quarters.

All the way there people on the street cheered them.

At their quarters the boys themselves cheered Barry time and again. His feat in descending the ladder as he did was regarded as one that none but a professional trapeze performer could do. They could not understand how he did it.

"I don't know," he said; "I never did it before. I had to do it to keep from falling. I could not hold her with one arm. She weighs ten thousand pounds, boys, and yet she doesn't look it."

They laughed. She was a little woman who did not weigh over one hundred and thirty pounds. Her babies weighed about thirty-five pounds more.

He went home to have his burns attended to and change his clothes. He was drenched to the skin with water.

When he appeared at the cabinet works the next day the workmen had read all about his feat in the papers. They cheered him lustily as he went to his bench. He laughed and bowed to them, saying:

"You'd have done the same thing, friends, had you been there."

He was working at his bench when a boy from the manager's office came up and said:

"They want you in the office."

"Who does?"

"The manager sent me for you," replied the boy.

CHAPTER IV.

"IT IS NEVER WISE TO RESIST AN OFFICER."

Young Barry lost no time in reporting at the manager's office. There he found two men who eyed him in a way he could not understand.

"You sent for me, sir?" he said to the manager.

"Yes. Do you know that gentleman there?" and the manager pointed to one of the two strangers.

Barry looked at the man, shook his head and said:

"No, sir. I have no recollection of ever seeing him before."

"Is this your picture?" the man asked, handing him a photograph.

Barry took it and looked at it carefully for a minute or so.

"No, I never sat for that picture, though it looks very much like me."

The man smiled and said:

"It was taken two years ago."

"Where?" Barry asked.

"Down in New York City."

"I was never in New York City in my life, sir!"

The man again smiled, and turning to the other one with him, said:

"You are satisfied he is the right man, are you?"

"Yes—fully. His name is Grady."

"What!" ejaculated Barry.

"Your name is Grady, and you sat for that picture, for I saw you do so."

Tom Barry was so astonished for a few moments he did not say a word. The first man laid a hand on his arm and said:

"I am a detective. You are my prisoner and must go back where you came from."

"You are mistaken, sir. I am not your prisoner," and he looked the man full in the face as he spoke. "My name is Tom Barry. I was never in New York City in my life, and no man ever knew me as Grady."

"That won't do, my fine fellow," said the detective, smiling and producing a pair of handcuffs. "Hold out your hands and make no trouble. You are going back, understand."

"I beg your pardon, sir. I don't understand what you mean about going back. I do know, though, that you can't arrest me or put any irons on me."

"I can't, eh!" and he seized him by the collar.

Whack!

Barry gave him a blow on the chest that sent him reeling clear across the room, where he came in contact with the wall, and sank unconscious to the floor. The other man sprang at him, but met the same fate, to the surprise of the manager and two bookkeepers in the office.

"Please shut the door, sir," Tom said to the manager, "and we'll see if we can find out what all this means."

The manager shut the door and stood gazing at Tom as though he regarded him as a wonder.

"What do they mean?" Tom asked him.

"He says you are a burglar and that your picture is in the Rogues Gallery," said one of the bookkeepers squarely in the face as he spoke.

"I believe you," said the manager. "But that looks like you," and he pointed to the picture.

"Nevertheless it is not mine. I know nothing about it. No man can come and pick me up that way."

"But it is not wise to resist an officer."

"No officer has any right to arrest an innocent man. I won't let any man arrest me without due process of law."

By that time the detective pulled himself together and sat upon the floor. The blow on the chest had knocked him out utterly. His face had the livid appearance of one in great pain. The other man lay where he fell and was groaning in pain. But the detective drew a revolver and said:

"Hold up your hands!"

"Never!" said Barry. "I am no criminal. I shall not try to leave here, but when you touch me to arrest me I'll give you a settler. Better go and try your hand on someone else."

"Don't shoot in here," said the manager, in no little terror.

"If he shoots and fails to kill me I'll make short work of him," said Tom, as the detective rose to his feet. The latter was game. He aimed the revolver at Tom's chest and ordered him to hold out his hands.

Quick as a flash Tom kicked him in the stomach, and gave him a blow on the ear that again laid him senseless on the floor.

The clerks started to run out.

"Don't leave, gentlemen," said Tom. "It is all over. He'll have to go to the hospital now, I guess."

"I'll take care of this, though," and the manager took up the revolver, which had fallen to the floor, and laid it on his desk.

"Perhaps you had better," said Tom, and then he turned to the other man and asked:

"Do you want anything more of me, sir?"

"No," was the reply.

"Then get up out of here before I break some of your bones, you lying whelp. When you want to see me you can find me at work at my bench."

The man was assisted to his feet. The blow on the chest had settled him. He was a man of peace after that. He sat down and gazed at Tom with a strange expression in his eyes.

"That picture looks like me—very much like me, but I never sat for it—was never in New York in my life. You want to be sure of your man before you tackle him."

"I am sure you are Grady," the detective said.

"Well, stick to it and try to take me if you wish to do so."

"Oh, there are plenty of ways to take you in."

"But you won't try it again yourself, eh?"

The man made no reply, and after a few minutes Tom added:

"You will please excuse me. I must go back to my work," and he made a low bow to him and went out and made his way back to his bench. Half an hour later the manager came to him and said:

"I had to send for the ambulance to take that detective to the hospital."

"I thought you would have to," laughed Tom.

"But see here, Barry," said the manager, "it won't do to resist an officer, you know."

"Of course not. If an officer comes to me with a warrant for my arrest I'll go with him. I am innocent. They are after the wrong man."

"Is it a case of mistaken identity?"

"Just that and nothing more. I never sat for such a picture, and was never in New York City."

"You hit a hard blow."

"Yes; I can kill a man with a blow of my fist."

"I didn't know you were so strong."

"I guess they didn't either," and he laughed.

"What will you do if they come with more men to take you?"

"Unless they have a warrant from a judge in Barrington, I'll knock out everyone of them."

When the noon hour came Tom quietly washed his face and hands and went home to dinner. On the way out of the shop the men stared at him in amazement. The story of what had happened in the manager's office had passed all through the big shop. Some believed he was guilty, and that he would not return from dinner, but make his escape from Barrington. Others said he would come back to work, as his manner indicated fearless innocence. When he did return and went to his bench the men cheered him. Half a hundred of them crowded around him to shake his hand.

"Much obliged to you, boys," he said. "I've never done anything I am ashamed of in all my life. If a man tries to arrest me without due process of law he takes a pretty big job on himself."

They laughed, shook hands with him, and went to their work.

The next day the whole story was in the Barrington papers. The detective had told it as he lay on his bed in the hospital. Said he:

"The man with me identified him and I tried to arrest him. He knocked us both out so quick we didn't know what ailed us. I am frank to say that he did not impress me as a guilty man. But the picture is the exact image of him—he admitted that himself—and the man said he recognized him. It may be a case of mistaken identity, but there can be no mistake about his ability to take care of himself. He is a young Samson in strength, and I don't care to run up against him again."

Tom read the story before he ate his breakfast, and had a laugh over it.

"It is a case of mistaken identity," he said to himself. "I didn't know anybody else looked so much like me. I'd like to meet Mr. Grady and thrash him for bringing this trouble upon me. It's pretty tough when one has a villain for a double; but I am not responsible for my good looks, but Grady is for his bad conduct," and he folded up the paper and put it in his pocket.

He was at his bench when Judge Macomb appeared at his side.

"Good-morning, judge," he said on seeing who he was.

"Good-morning, Barry," returned the judge. "Have you seen the papers this morning?"

"Yes, sir, I have."

"Well, you are innocent, are you?"

"As much so as you yourself are, judge," he replied.

"Very well then. Send for me when you need a friend or legal advice."

"Thank you, judge."

CHAPTER V.

"WE CAN'T REACH THEM."

The story of the attempt to arrest young Barry on the charge of being a burglar whose portrait adorned the Rogues'

Gallery in New York, created a tremendous sensation in Barrington. Only the day before the papers teemed with accounts of his daring rescue of a mother and two babes, and the whole city rang with praises of the dauntless fireman, whose skill and courage were unequalled by any in the State. Men and women were astonished, and there were many who believed him to be guilty, simply because of the picture and the fact of the attempted arrest. There are always people who believe the worst that is said of another, and he was no exception to the rule.

But his vigorous reply to the accusation also touched an element that exists in every community—that of manly resistance to wrong. The presence of the detective in the hospital, and his return to his work, told them that he was innocent, and nothing on earth could have convinced them to the contrary.

The members of No. 4 called at his boarding-house in a body, and told him they believed in him, and that they would lynch his accusers if he but said the word.

"Oh, wait till they get me, boys," he said to them. "I am sticking to my work, and if they think they can come and pick me up without due process of law, let 'em try it. I say to you, face to face, that I never was in New York in my life, and never sat for that picture. It is not mine, though the resemblance is strong. I have never done anything in my life to be ashamed of, and do not fear any man on earth."

That pleased the boys, who looked upon his feat in knocking out the detective and his assistant with as much admiration as upon his feat of the triple rescue. They cheered him boisterously, and he went to the engine house with them. There they held an indignation meeting and wanted to pass some fiery resolutions. But he laughed and begged them not to do it.

"Just let it be," he said. "They probably won't try it again. If they do, and in the same way, a funeral may follow, but I won't be in the hearse. I am not quarrelsome—only a good-natured hard hitter—that's all."

They laughed and cheered. "Good-natured hard hitter" struck them as a funny phrase, and they repeated and laughed all the more. It was a jolly crowd and good humor prevailed, and it was close on to midnight ere they thought of going home. Just as they were about to break up the great fire bell rang out.

Instantly everyone donned his shirt and helmet. In less than thirty seconds after the first stroke the old engine went roaring down the street. The boys ran like racehorses. The fire was in the tenement district where lived many families of working people. No. 4 was first at the scene, and the boys threw a stream even before any other engine appeared on the ground.

Women and children were in danger, for all but a few were asleep when the alarm was given. Ladders were run up and many were brought out, making very narrow escapes. The flames spread rapidly and soon every window belched forth dense volumes of smoke, with here and there fiery tongues of red, forked lightning.

Out of one of the third story windows, which was the top floor, screams were heard. The firemen looked at each other and shook their heads.

"Too late!" cried the foreman of No. 2. "No man can get there, God help 'em!"

Tom Barry sprang to one of the ladders and ran up with squirrel-like speed.

"Come back! Come back!" went up from both firemen and spectators. But he paid no attention to them. In another moment he disappeared through one of the windows, through which came the screams of a woman, as well as a dense volume

of smoke and fiery sparks. One, two, three minutes passed, and red flames belched through that same window.

"Oh, but it's all up with Barry!" groaned Hugh Dalton, foreman of No. 4. The screams had ceased, and nothing but the roaring and crackling of the flames was heard. The ladder caught fire.

"Take away that ladder—hold it in readiness if he appears!" came through the foreman's trumpet.

"There he is on the roof!" cried one hundred voices at once, as a figure was seen through the smoke on the roof of the doomed house. It was difficult to make out who he was in the darkness and the smoke.

Suddenly he was heard.

"Send up a ladder, quick!"

It was Barry.

But no ladder on the ground could reach the roof.

"We can't reach you!" sung out Dalton through his trumpet.

Then as the wind parted a cloud of smoke it was seen that he had a child in his arms.

"Heaven save them!" screamed a woman in the crowd on the street as the flames were seen to burst through the roof behind him. A cry of horror went up from the multitude.

It was indeed a perilous position for them. The building was of frame and was going like so much straw.

Suddenly he was seen to cram his mouth full of the child's clothes. Then he seized a telegraph wire that ran from the roof to the roof of the house across the street—just a slight wire. He caught it with both hands, holding the child with his teeth, and began moving out over the chasm, hand over hand.

Exclamations of fear and horror went up. Every face was turned upward to watch him. As he progressed the wire sagged many feet. It was plain that he could not climb up the incline at the other end.

"Run up that ladder there!" cried Dalton when Tom hung up his hand over the middle of the street.

It was done, and the ladder touched him, and leaned against the wire. But if he let go of the wire it would fly up again and the ladder would fall over.

Dalton was quick to see the danger. He called for another ladder to run up on the other side.

"Hold on, Tom—one minute!" he sung out, and Tom hung still in mid-air.

The two ladders touched at the top and faithful firemen held them securely.

"Now let go and come down!"

He carefully got hold with one hand before letting go with the other. The wire flew up fully ten feet when relieved of his weight.

The wails of the two-year-old child were heard as he descended. When halfway down the crowd began cheering. Men and women wept for joy as they saw how a brave man had risked his life to save a child.

When he reached the ground a woman seized the child and pressed it to her bosom.

"Be kind to it for its mother is dead!" he sung out. "I tried to save her, but she fell through a hole in the stairs and went down into a red sea of fire!"

Wails of grief went up from tender-hearted women and men. They hugged and kissed the little one, and a strapping big Irish woman threw her arms round Barry's neck, kissed him and called down Heaven's blessings on his head.

"Are you hurt, Tom?" Dalton asked him.

"I don't know—haven't had time to find out yet," he said.

"I don't want to get into as hot a place as that again, though."

The house was totally destroyed and those on either side badly damaged. Only by almost superhuman efforts were the others saved. Continuous streams of water poured on them,

and clouds of steam went up with clouds of smoke till all danger of ignition had passed. Tom could hardly do any more work as a fireman, as men and women grabbed him when they could get near enough to him to do so, to shake his hand and speak words of praise to him.

"Better stop work, Tom," said the fire chief, "and let 'em shake hands with you."

"That's harder work than shaking hands with the pump here," he laughed.

"But some of 'em may have kisses for you," suggested the chief, with a smile.

"Well, when it comes to that I draw the line at the men," and he drew his shirt sleeve across his mouth and stood waiting for an attack. They rushed at him, laughing and showering blessing on his head. He kissed quite a number of girls, and shook hands with many men and women till at last he said it was time to go home. They all finally went away and the firemen remained at the scene till the last ember had been extinguished.

It was too late in the night for the papers to get an account of the rescue, but the story ran from mouth to mouth, gathering force and remance at each repetition. Men were astonished. Old firemen said he was a marvel—that he had the strength of a Samson and bore a charmed life—that no other fireman could do what he had done and live.

Tom was at his bench the next day when the manager came to him and said:

"There are two men in the office to see you."

"Who are they?"

"I don't know. They are strangers to me. They look like detectives."

"Well, I'll see them," and he took off his apron and went out with the manager. In the office were two men waiting for him.

They looked hard at him and one said:

"Do you know me, Grady?"

"No—and my name is not Grady."

"See here, I am Deputy Sheriff Garvan. Here is a warrant for your arrest."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MISTAKE OF THE DEPUTY SHERIFFS.

Tom looked at the warrant. It called for the arrest of one Grady, a burglar.

"This is for Grady. That is not me. You can't arrest me," he said.

They both sprang at him. He stood still and looked at them while they held his arms.

"Let's get outside," he said. "I don't want to do any damage to the office furniture."

"Want to resist, eh?" said the deputy sheriff. "Well, come on, and we'll have it out with you," and they held on to him as they went out. Each had hold of his arms, and one had a grip on his shirt collar. Out on the sidewalk both men had their feet knocked from under them, as by a lightning stroke. But they held on to him. Quick as a flash he butted one in the face and he sank down helpless and unconscious. The other was slammed down on the stone pavement with such force that he too lost consciousness. All the office force was looking on. Tom felt in the pockets of the deputy sheriff, found a pair of handcuffs and clapped them on both, locking them together.

The manager roared with merriment, and so did the clerks in the office. Tom took a pistol from each of them. In doing

so, he found another pair of steel bracelets. He put them on the other two hands. By that time they began to come to. Tom sat down on the steps of the office and waited. The two hundred workmen in the big shop heard of what was going on and came pouring out to see the fight. But it was all over, and they only saw the two men lying on the ground trying to get up. But they were unable to do so on account of being linked together.

"Want me to help you up?" Barry asked them.

The deputy sheriff looked at him in dumfounded amazement.

"Why, you blasted——"

"Oh, come now," said Tom. "None of that. I won't have it, you see," and he rose to his feet and looked angry.

"Why, don't you know the law will punish you for this—resisting an officer?" the deputy said.

"No. Officers have no right to attack a private citizen. You have a warrant for Grady. I am Tom Barry. I'd knock out the judge himself if he should assault me as you did."

"You are Grady. I arrested you once before. I know you. You got two years and then escaped."

"Arrested me yourself, eh? Did I resist you then?"

"No."

"Then you ought to know you have made a mistake."

The manager had sent for Judge Macomb. He came up and found a big crowd in front of the shops.

"Why do you keep after this man?" he asked the deputy, whom someone had helped to his feet.

"He is Grady, a burglar and convict," said the deputy.

"Where is the proof of that?"

"It is here—we both swear to his identity."

"The picture the detective had looks like him," said the judge; "but people frequently look alike, you know."

"Draw off his shirt and look at his left shoulder. Grady has a long scar there where he was cut in a fight. It's down in the warden's book at Sing Sing."

"Why didn't you say so before?" exclaimed Barry, springing to his feet and drawing off his shirt.

The crowd looked in eager interest. His white arms, shoulders and chest were clear of all scars.

"Look for yourself," said the judge to the deputy.

The astonished deputy glared at him like one in a dream.

"You see your mistake, do you not?" said Judge Macomb.

"Yes; it is a mistake, but he is the image of Grady."

"But that does not justify him in assaulting us," said the assistant deputy.

"Even to the taking of your life, sir," said the judge. "You assailed an innocent man, and the right of self-defense cannot be taken away from an American citizen."

The crowd cheered lustily, and by this time two policemen came up to see what had drawn such a crowd there. They soon found out and proceeded to disperse the crowd. Then they tried to unfasten the two handcuffs but failed. They were a new kind which the Barrington police did not understand.

"Guess they'll have to be cut off."

"There's a little key in my pocket that unlocks it," said the deputy. "Get it, and get it quick, please."

The officer searched his pocket but failed to find any key.

"Guess you've lost it," said the officer.

"Look again—it must be in one of my pockets," and he had a scared look on his face. Tom began to laugh, and the crowd took the cue and roared with laughter at the expense of the two men.

"Wear 'em back home!" sung out a voice in the crowd.

"Yes," said another, "they're becoming—look lovely on you!"

"Serves you right!" sung out a third.

"Shut up, all of you!" ordered one of the policemen.

"You have no right to order people to shut up," said a tough-looking fellow.

Whack!

The indiscreet officer struck him with his club. In an instant a dozen men sprang at him, knocked him down and trampled on him. The other one met the same fate, and but for the heroic efforts of Tom Barry and Judge Macomb, both would have been killed. They were half dead when Tom took them up and carried them into the office of the cabinet works. He had knocked down a dozen men in rescuing them. The two handcuffed deputies were roughly handled by the crowd, too, and they were also taken into the building.

Judge Macomb then stood on the steps and made a speech to the crowd.

"Go to your homes," he said, "and let this matter rest where it is. The officer had no right to strike the man for what he said, and you should be satisfied with the punishment given him. More police will be here in a few moments, and if you will all go away no more trouble will follow."

"That's good advice, boys!" sung out Tom. "Show the judge that you are good enough to follow it."

"You bet we will! Hurray for Barry and the judge!"

The crowd cheered, laughed, and then went away. More police came a few minutes later and to them the judge told what had happened. They went in search of the ringleaders, they said, leaving one of their number to take care of the two wounded officers and the deputy sheriffs from New York.

The manager of the cabinet works persuaded one of his workmen to file off the handcuffs. It took him an hour to do it. They both said some harsh things to Tom, who laughed and said:

"Say what you please, but if you touch me I'll wale the life out of you."

"I'll get even with you for this," said the first deputy.

"Oh, you're the kind that would waylay a fellow in the dark and sandbag him, I guess. That's what you mean by getting even. Why not take off your coat right here and thrash me like a man?"

"Come, Tom, you must not talk that way now. Go to your work. You are taking a holiday off."

"Oh, you came in and told me to come out," laughed Tom, as he went back to his work.

An ambulance came for the two policemen and took them to the hospital. They were both badly hurt, and that evening several arrests were made of men who had taken part in the riot.

But when the papers told how Barry had thrashed the two New York deputies and handcuffed them, the whole city laughed and cheered him. Then, when they read how he had pulled off his shirt, and showed that he did not have Grady's scar, they grew indignant, and many said he had shown a great deal of forbearance. His heroic defense of the two policemen made the whole force his friends.

That night the boys of No. 4 took possession of him and placed him on the old engine. Then they drew it through the streets, cheering and singing songs. Thousands of people cheered, too, as they saw and understood it. The mayor of the town crowded forward and shook his hand.

"I am not a party to all this fuss, your honor," Tom said to him. "The boys are doing it, and I won't resist that sort of thing. Haven't the heart to do it."

"I don't blame you," laughed the mayor, "but you are drawing a great crowd on the streets, for which the police are not prepared. Tell the boys to go to their quarters."

"Just come up here with me, and I think I can work it," and he caught the mayor by the hand and pulled him upon the engine. Then he sung out:

"Now, boys, pull for home! I've got the mayor! He is going to join No. 4!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE BOYS CAPTURE THE MAYOR.

With a wild cheer the boys of No. 4 dashed through the street at a breakneck speed. The mayor's hair stood on end. He was taking a most unexpected ride, and a very rough one at that. When a wheel struck an uneven place the mayor's teeth rattled and his dignity was all broken up.

"Can't you—stop 'em?" he said to Barry.

But the noise was so great Tom could not hear him; but he held on to him to prevent him from falling off. Several times he got a jolt that bounced him up about a foot, but they were going so fast they soon reached the old building in which the engine found a home. They ran her in, took the mayor on their shoulders, bore him upstairs and placed him in the foreman's chair, and gave him three cheers and a tiger.

Then he pulled himself together and said, as he rose to his feet:

"My dear boys, you have given me a fright that will last me a month."

The boys yelled. They were a rough lot, but true as steel to duty.

"Yet I am glad I am here," he continued.

"Oh, we had to have you!" cried one of the boys, and another laugh followed.

"I want to congratulate you on your splendid work," he continued. "The whole city owes you a debt of gratitude and——"

"Then let the city pay it by giving us a new engine house!" sung out a voice, and the boys sprang to their feet and yelled indorsement of the suggestion. The mayor was staggered. It was an unexpected thing, but he saw the justice of the demand.

"You deserve one," he said, "and I promise you that I will suggest it to the aldermen at their next meeting."

Then they broke loose again. They were hilariously enthusiastic. He made them a stirring speech and was cheered lustily. When he finished Tom sprang up and said:

"It's a good joke all round, boys. His honor came to me uptown on the streets and said we were parading without a permit, and suggested that I try to get you to go home to headquarters. Well, I know the spirit that moved you, and that I was a prisoner in your hands. Nobody but you fellows could arrest me, you know, and so I had to play a little trick on you to comply with his honor's suggestion. I yanked him upon the brave old engine and told you he wanted to join us. You didn't tumble, but did make a break for home. Oh, he was scared! He told the truth like a man, and owned up. Well, we have him here and must make him an honorary member. He isn't frisky enough to run with us, so we'll excuse him when the fire bell rings. Your honor, can we enroll you as a member of old No. 4?"

"Yes, sir!" responded the mayor, and the boys cheered him.

He signed the roll and then the boys sang an old fireman's song called "The Brave Old Fireman." He was touched by the sentiment of the song, and rose up to speak again. This time no one interrupted him. He spoke feelingly, and some of the boys were moved to tears. He had a fine flow of language, and the boys had moved him as he had seldom been before. Scores of men had come in from the street, and were listening to him.

When he finished the boys escorted him to his home in a

carriage, cheering him on the way. It was near midnight when they left him. It was an experience he never forgot.

But the members of the other companies now began to feel a little jealous of the honors the old Hand Engine was winning. Members of No. 1, the aristocratic company of the city, made many slighting remarks about the noise those boys were making.

A few days after the riot in front of the cabinet works the manager again went to Tom's bench and said a lady in a carriage in front of the office wanted to see him.

"Got any handcuffs with her?" he asked.

"No, I believe not," laughed the manager. "You needn't be uneasy."

Tom threw off his apron and went out with him. He saw a dashing turnout in front of the office and in the carriage a very beautiful young lady. Going out to the carriage, he bowed and said:

"You sent for me, miss?"

"Are you Mr. Barry?"

"I am Tom Barry," he replied.

"I am Minnie Macomb."

"Ah! I am glad to see you have recovered from your injuries."

"Thank you. You have recovered, too, I see. Give me your hand, Mr. Barry, please."

He reached through the carriage door, and she grasped it in both hers, saying, as she looked him full in the face:

"I owe you my life, Mr. Barry, and as long as I live you cannot have a truer friend than Minnie Macomb. My parents feel the same way, too."

"I am sure I shall appreciate your friendship, Miss Macomb," he replied, "and it will always be a matter of pride that I have such a friend. But I am not the one to presume on circumstances and take advantage of—"

"Please don't talk that way. There are no social barriers between us. You have knocked them all down."

"You have a grateful heart, I am sure," he said, "and what you say proves you are a true woman. I am all the more pleased that I was able to render you such a service. I know that you have a host of friends to whom you are very dear."

"I hope I have," she replied, looking pleased at the compliment; "and I want you to see and know some of them. Can you come and see me on Monday evening? I want to introduce you to some of them."

"Really I could not do so without making myself liable to the accusation of presuming on your generosity."

"But why should you care for that, Mr. Barry? You can't stop people from talking, you know."

"I fear that you do this out of gratitude."

"Gratitude has a great deal to do with it, of course," she frankly admitted. "But you have qualities that women admire in a man, and a number of young ladies, all my personal friends, have begged me to present you to them. You must not refuse me, Mr. Barry, for I assure you that they all sincerely admire you. Don't let ideas of social life bother you. Make all the friends you can in the best society and then keep them."

"That is good advice," he said, "and I assure you that my ambition leads me that way. I'll go, even though I may be laughed at for my awkwardness."

"No one will laugh at you, for we all know that yours is a strong manhood—and that is what women admire most in your sex. I shall expect you, now."

"I'll be there—if the fire bell doesn't send me somewhere else."

"Oh, I'll have that bell muffled," she laughed, and then she again shook hands with him, after which she was driven away.

"Well, well!" he said, as he gazed after the carriage. "That is worse than a fire. I am to be placed on exhibition for a lot of young ladies, who will try to make a hero of me. She is a beauty, though, and not a fool, either. She talks good sense and is as frank as a man."

He turned and went back inside.

"Didn't arrest you, eh?" said the manager, as he passed through the office.

"Worse—I had to surrender—had no chance to resist."

The manager smiled and the two bookkeepers grinned. They saw that he was charmed by the beautiful girl whose life he had saved.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WORK OF THE SANDBAG.

Tom thought over the situation, and made up his mind that it was a duty he owed to himself to say nothing of what was due to the young ladies, to go dressed according to the requirements of polite society. He took what money he had and went to a big clothing store that evening. When he came away a fine full dress suit had been bought and paid for, and the next day it was sent to his boarding-house.

Mrs. Morrison could not resist the temptation to see what was in the bundle, so she and Maggie knew what was in it long ere he came home. Maggie was very much exercised over it, for she was more than half in love with him. She was a hard worker, but was sentimental and full of romance.

When Tom came home in the evening, she met him and asked him if he were going to a ball.

"No," and he shook his head.

"What are you buying a full dress suit for, then?" she asked.

"Because I am to take you to the theater some evening," he said, laughing.

"My! Did you buy that suit to take me out in?"

"Oh, no! I'll wear the suit myself. You'll have to wear your best, you know."

She blushed and ran away. Down in the kitchen she cried over it, believing he had made fun of her. That is the way of some girls.

He went up to his room and tried on the suit. It was the first of the kind he had ever had on.

He surveyed himself in the mirror and said:

"I shall have to put it on often in order to get used to it."

But he did not do so, for he feared the fire bell would call him when he had it on. Hugh Dalton came to see him the next evening and said that a party of young people was coming to the engine house on Thursday evening, and that the boys were going to decorate the engine and rooms.

"I've got an engagement for that evening and can't be there," Tom told him.

"Oh, that won't do at all," said Dalton. "You must be there, by all means."

"But I cannot. I have made an engagement to be at Judge Macomb's on that evening."

"The deuce! Going there, are you?"

"Yes, on invitation."

"Well, I don't blame you. We'll have to change the time of the visit to the engine house."

"That's all nonsense," said Tom. "I'll get there as soon as I can."

"They will be disappointed. The girls want to get acquainted with you, and you must be there. We'll change to the next Thursday evening."

"Make it Friday evening."

"No, that won't do."

"Wednesday, then?"

"That's regular sparking night."

"Let 'em spark at the engine house."

"That won't do. When spooning is going on three makes a crowd. I've got a girl myself and know how it is," and both laughed.

"Well, do as you please," said Tom. "I can't break the engagement I've made."

"Of course not."

The two friends talked quite a while over company matters, and then Dalton took leave of him and started for his own home. But he had not gone fifty paces from the Morrison cottage ere two men darted out from under the shadow of a house and beat him down with sandbags.

Half an hour later he was found lying there apparently dead by a policeman; he summoned an ambulance and had him sent to the hospital.

There he was recognized as the young foreman of No. 4. But he was unconscious and could give no account of himself.

Tom saw it in the paper as he was on his way to his work.

"By George!" he exclaimed. "That happened just after he left me last night. Sandbagged, eh? I'll wager that they took him for me, for I don't think Hugh has an enemy in the world. Poor Hugh! Hanged if I wouldn't like to get my hands on those cowards."

When he reached the shop he told the manager what had happened.

"Why do you think it was intended for you?" the manager asked.

"Because I have recently knocked out four men who have threatened to get even with me, and it happened so close to my home they must have been waiting for me."

"You may be right about it," said the manager. "It would give me a most uncomfortable feeling to know that men were lying in wait for me to club me to death."

"So it does me. I am not afraid of an open enemy, but do fear an enemy in the dark."

"Of course. Any man would. Lord, but such men ought to be killed."

"Yes, and if a man attacks me that way he will be killed, unless he knocks me out before I can get my hands on him."

At noon, instead of going home to dinner, Tom hurried to the hospital to see Hugh. He found him conscious, but badly hurt. He had been sandbagged.

"I think they took me for you, Tom," Hugh said.

"They! How many were there?"

"Two. One hissed out: 'This makes us even!' as he struck me. Then I knew no more till this morning."

"I suspected that when I heard of it, Hugh," said Tom. "I guess I'll even up matters with 'em some day or evening, and when I do I'll remember you, my friend. I hope you are not badly hurt?"

"I don't know. I feel as if I had been hit from head to feet all at once. The doctor says it's the shock of the blow."

"I am sorry, but we'll see if we can even things up with 'em for you."

Several others of No. 4 called, as did some from Nos. 2 and 3. But none came from No. 1. The chief of the fire department call to see him, and then drove round to the cabinet works to see Tom.

"You must act as foreman of No. 4 till Dalton's recovery," he said to Tom.

"The members must ask me to do so, chief," Tom said to him.

"They will—I have asked them to do so."

"That's all right, then. What do you think of his chances?"

"Very slim. The doctors think he has a chance, and that is about all."

"Is it so bad as that?"

"Yes. The sandbag is a terrible weapon that leaves no scar behind it."

"I am sorry, for Hugh is a good fellow and a brave fireman. I'd like to get a grip on those sandbaggers."

"The police are looking for them."

"I hope they may get 'em, but guess they left town, thinking they had done the job for me."

"You may be right about that," said the chief. "They may come back, though, when they learn that they struck the wrong man. It seems strange, though, that detectives and deputy sheriffs should be guilty of such things."

"Oh, they are like other people," laughed Tom. "Those two fellows will never hear the last of how they tried to arrest a boy and were whipped and handcuffed in the attempt. They want to get even in some way."

"I can hardly believe that they are at the bottom of that attack on Dalton."

"I can't see how any one else has a grudge against me."

"Maybe they were not after you at all."

"I am quite sure of it," said Tom. "When a deputy sheriff threatens to get even on a man whom he had acknowledged to be innocent, you can bet he is a bad man."

"How did you get your strength, Barry?" the chief asked him after a pause of some minutes.

"Really I don't know," laughed Tom. "I was born with it, I guess, and I have taken good care of myself and done a good deal to develop muscle."

Tom went to work and did not have another interruption during the afternoon. In the evening he went to the engine rooms to meet the boys there.

"The chief told us to make you foreman till Dalton got out again," said one of the boys.

"Do just as you please about that, boys," he said to them, and in ten minutes he was elected.

Half an hour later news came to them that Hugh Dalton was dead.

The sandbaggers had done their work but too well. The boys were amazed. They little knew the terrible force of a blow with a sandbag. But their indignation got the better of them, and they swore to settle the account with the enemy if they were ever caught.

CHAPTER IX.

"FIREMEN, TO THE RESCUE!"

The death of Hugh Dalton created a profound sensation in Barrington. The aldermen met and offered a reward of one thousand dollars for the arrest of his murderers, with proof to convict. That set the police and detectives to work, and naturally the two deputies down in New York, who were suspected, had to make a showing as to where they were on the night the attack was made. They brought witnesses to prove that they were in New York at the time.

"That let's them out," said Tom, when he heard of it; "still, I believe they had something to do with it all the same."

Thursday Dalton was buried and all the firemen in the city escorted the remains to the cemetery. There Judge Macomb spoke feelingly of the brotherhood that existed among those who risked their lives to save property and life. When he finished Tom stepped forward to throw in the first spadeful

of earth. He hesitated, looked down into the grave, and said:

"Hugh Dalton, you were my friend, brave and true. You were honest and manly, and I loved you as a friend and brother. As long as I live I shall hold your memory dear in my heart, and ever stand ready to avenge your untimely end. When the red flames surged about us, and death seemed ready to claim us both, you never flinched, but stood true as steel. Soldiers have monuments to bear record of the men they slew in battle. You shall have one to bear record of the lives you saved—snatched from the devouring flames that almost ate the flesh from your bones. Farewell, Hugh—friend and brother!" and he threw in the spadeful of earth while tears streamed down his face.

Sobs were heard on all sides in the concourse of people around him. Grief was seen in every face, and while the earth was being heaped upon the grave, Judge Macomb called out in clear, ringing tones:

"Friends, let us start that monument to the memory of this brave fireman now—who was but a youth of eighteen years. I will subscribe five hundred dollars. Who will give as much?"

"I will!" cried another, who was a big property owner.

"And so will I!" said a third.

"That's fifteen hundred dollars—a good start," said the judge. "Who next?"

Two more \$500 men spoke up. Then came the \$300 and \$200 men, and so on down to ten dollars and fives, till over \$5,000 had been subscribed on the spot.

"Thus do we honor the brave men on whom we depend in the hour of peril," said the judge. "Let me ask all those who subscribed to this fund, and all those who wish to subscribe, to meet at the City Hall to-morrow evening and appoint the proper committees to take charge of it, and see that a suitable monument be secured and erected."

Then the crowd dispersed. The various fire companies marched back to their headquarters, and the city again assumed its busy hum.

"I never saw the hearts of a multitude so touched in all my life, as were the people at the simple words uttered by Tom Barry over that grave," said the mayor to the fire chief, as they wended their way back to their respective offices.

"It was wonderful," said the chief. "I never heard anything so eloquent in my life; nor was I ever so surprised."

"He seems to have all the elements of an orator in him," remarked the mayor.

"Yes. He had not intended to say a word, I am sure. The thing seemed to come to him irresistibly—on the impulse of the moment."

"That's what I thought at the time."

That evening Tom went to the residence of Judge Macomb. He wore his dress suit, and seemed to be as self-contained as though he had worn it all his life. He was ushered into the reception-room by a servant. The judge came in a moment later and greeted him, though he had a surprised look on his face.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed one of the young ladies who had obtained a peep at him. "The rough fireman hero has on a dress suit like any society gentleman."

"Indeed!" said Minnie Macomb. "I am glad he thought so much of us to get one. I found him a gentleman when I met him in his working clothes," and she went in to greet him. Her greeting was cordial as she extended her hand to him.

"I was afraid you would not come," she said.

"I had promised to do so," he said. "I always keep a promise if in my power to do so."

"Good!" said the judge. "That is the corner stone of a successful life!"

"But the death of a friend or relative is always a good excuse," she said. "I am glad you have come. I want to give you my personal subscription to that monument fund."

"Ah! You know what a fireman is worth in times of peril."

"Indeed I do. I know, too, that some firemen are braver than others, and——"

"Don't make any comparisons, dear Miss Macomb. All firemen risk their lives to a greater or less degree. When I look at you I cannot but help thinking I saved the greatest treasure that was ever snatched from the flames."

She blushed violently in her radiant beauty.

"Ah! So you did, my boy!" said her father. "So you did. You said that well, too. By the way, that was the finest tribute to-day I ever heard. It moved everybody and gave me the cue to call for subscriptions."

"It came from my heart, sir," said Tom, with a tinge of sadness in his tones.

"Of course it did. We all saw that. It was what touched us."

Here a dozen young ladies came into the room, and Minnie Macomb presented each one to him by name. Each extended her hand and looked him in the face, and had something pleasant to say. Then they stood about him and he performed the wonderful feat of conversing with the entire bevy for ten or fifteen minutes, much to their delight and surprise.

Soon young men began to arrive. He saw several members of No. 1 in the party. One of them came up to him, extended his hand and said:

"Glad to see you, Barry. My name is Curtis. The first time we met you gave me a black eye. I forgave you, though, for what you afterwards did," and he looked at Minnie Macomb. "I'd let you gouge out both my eyes if it were necessary to save her."

"I believe you, sir," said Tom. "She is one of the kind a man is willing to die for. It has been so in all ages, and will be so in all future time. But I didn't know her then. If I had I might have killed you," and they laughed over it. A young lady was near enough to hear it, and went and repeated it to Minnie.

"He knows how to say pretty things," laughed Minnie, and then they fell to discussing him as he appeared before them. They decided that he was not the awkward youth they expected to find him.

During the evening it was quite evident that the society young men did not relish the way the girls lionized him.

"I find him not only well educated, but a well read young man," said one young lady. "I began talking to him about books, and found that he had read ten to my one. My! I had to stop to keep from betraying my own ignorance," and she laughed. "It was a narrow escape for me."

An hour was spent in social enjoyment. There were seven members of No. 4 present, all in dress suits. Suddenly the great fire bell rang out. Tom sprang to his feet, looked at the others, and sung out:

"Firemen, to the rescue!"

CHAPTER X.

THE STRANGE WOMAN IN THE FIRE.

"Gone to a fire in a dress suit!" exclaimed one of the ladies among the guests, as Tom dashed out of the mansion of Judge Macomb at the first tap of the great fire bell. "Did you ever see such a man!"

"He is a born hero!" exclaimed the fair hostess. "He lets nothing interfere with his duty as a fireman."

"It is not in our district," said young Curtis, "or we would be with him. Each company attends to its own district, and if more help is needed the other companies respond to a second or third alarm."

"But he called all of you to the rescue!" said another young lady, her excitement getting the better of her judgment.

"Yes, so he did," laughed one of No. 1's members, "but that was all for effect on you ladies. He didn't know whether it is a fire or a false alarm. Even if he did he has no right to call us to the rescue. He belongs to another company altogether. He is a bright fellow and knows how to play his game."

"I can testify to that myself," said Minnie, the fair hostess. "I am a living and willing witness of that fact."

"I beg pardon—I meant no reflection, Miss Macomb," said the young man, changing color.

"Neither did I," she replied. "He is the bravest of the brave at a fire or elsewhere, and the peer of any man in any walk of life."

"Indeed he is!" exclaimed a half dozen young ladies in a voice.

"And he is but a youth yet," added Minnie. "He has a future before him—if his daring does not cut him off in his young manhood."

The seven young members of No. 1 heard every word, and a deep hatred of Tom Barry at once took possession of them. They, too, had worked bravely at fires, but had not received such praise at the hands of the fair sex. His calling them to the rescue angered them, for they believed it was an assumption on his part, not to say a piece of theatrical claptrap; yet it had captured the girls with marvelous completeness, and they were the victims of it in his absence.

Suddenly the great fire bell rang out a second alarm—a call for more help. They sprang to their feet.

"Come, boys, we are wanted!" cried Curtis, and they hurried away in a body. The girls all ran out on the piazza to see them off. They ran down the street at full speed, and were soon out of sight. From the piazza they could see the broad glare of red light in the south side of the city.

"Oh, it must be an awful fire!" exclaimed one of the girls. "Let's all of us go down there and see it!"

"I'll go with you," said the judge, getting his hat and cane.

The girls put on hats and wraps and went out—about a dozen of them—the judge and two of them leading the way.

People were running to the fire from every direction, and, as huge tongues of flames shot upwards, emitting millions of sparks, the excitement increased. It was nearly a mile away from where the party of ladies were, but they went on, determined to see it.

"Ah! It is in the Burwell block of tenement houses!" said the judge. "They are all of frame, and nothing can save them if the fire gets a good start among them."

"It seems to have a good start," said one of the young ladies.

"Yes, and I fear lives will be lost, as there are many families of poor people living in that block. There goes No. 1. They are the last to get there, for their quarters are farthest away from that part of the city."

The firemen dashed by on truck and engine—a fine, bright new steamer that was really a thing of beauty. They gave a cheer for the party of ladies as they dashed by on their way to the fire, and the latter waved fans and handkerchiefs at them.

When the party reached the scene of conflagration, they found a great crowd of anxious people there. They could not

get within a block of the fire, but succeeded in getting a position where they could see the panorama of destruction.

When Tom Barry dashed out of the house of Judge Macomb he knew pretty well where the fire was, from the signals struck by the great fire bell.

"They will get there ahead of me if I go to the engine house," he said to himself as he ran at full speed. "I'll go on to the fire and get a hat from one of the boys."

He reached the fire ahead of the engine. Flames and smoke were pouring out of one of the buildings—and so were men, women and children in every condition of dress. Like most poor people whose possessions are few, the women were trying to save what they had, trusting to others to save the children. Tom threw off his coat and vest—he was already bareheaded—and dashed into the building to save lives. He cared nothing for property while a life was in peril. He caught up children right and left, and hustled them out. When No. 4 dashed up and started a stream going, he ran out with a child on each arm.

"Lend me a hat, boys!" he cried, and then they knew him, though he had on a white dress shirt and trousers of fine black cloth.

"Here—here, Tom!" and a dozen helmets were tendered him by the members. He clapped one on his head and sung out:

"To the rescue, boys! The house is full of women and children!"

A half dozen boys dashed into the house with him, and a number of women were brought out. Tom brought out a woman, who, as soon as she was let go, ran back in again to save some household treasure. He took her out the second time, and called to a bystander to hold her. The man grabbed her, and Tom ran back into the house.

Quick as a flash the woman wrenched loose from the man and darted into the house again. In the blinding smoke that filled the rooms Tom ran against her again. Of course she was seized and hustled out. He then recognized her, and sung out:

"Will somebody hold this poor woman? She is crazed, and will perish if she goes in again!"

Then two men sprang forward and caught her. He ran back into the house searching for more children, or any others that might be in there. The woman never said a word, but the two men found that she was a giant in strength. She flung them right and left, and ere others could come to their aid darted into the house again, right into the very jaws of a terrible death. A cry of horror went up from the crowd, and no one dared follow her. Tom was already in there, and people stood in a terrible suspense, knowing that unless he came out soon it would be the end of him and the woman, too.

One, two, three—five minutes passed and neither of them appeared. The roof fell in and the flames caught on to buildings on both sides of it.

"Poor Tom!" cried several of the boys of No. 4, and some were seen crying like children as they worked the crank of the old engine.

"Barry is lost!"

"Tom Barry is dead!"

"Barry is burned to cinders!"

Such were the words that ran from mouth to mouth in the crowd of spectators. Soon the news reached the party of young ladies in charge of Judge Macomb.

"What's that!" exclaimed the judge, stopping the man who had repeated it in his hearing.

"Barry is dead—burnt up!" said the man.

Minnie Macomb gave a scream and sank down in a death-like swoon. The young ladies with her began screaming and crying and ringing their hands.

"Don't you believe it, girls!" cried the judge, who did not know that Minnie had swooned. "That boy has more lives than a cat."

"I saw him go in and he never came out again. The roof fell in on him, sir," said the man.

"Oh, judge, come to Minnie!" cried one of the girls, and he sprang forward to see what ailed her. He took her up in his arms, looked into her face and said:

"She has fainted. I must take her into some house," and he started for the stoop of the nearest door. One of the girls rang the bell. No one was inside. All were out on the street looking at the fire. They went to the next door and were admitted. He laid her on the sofa and asked for water. It was brought to him, and he dashed a glassful of it into her face. But not until she was fairly drenched did she come to. Then she looked around, and did not seem to know any one—not even her father. Suddenly she screamed and fainted again. Then the girls became demoralized and began to scream again for all they were worth, to the amazement of the family whose home they had invaded.

CHAPTER XI.

A TERRIBLE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

In the meantime, what had become of Tom Barry in that seething caldron of flame? He was in search of a child whom he believed had been left behind in one of the rooms, when he ran against that woman a fourth time. He caught her in his arms, and started to hustle out with her. But he was blinded by the strong smoke that filled the room, and ran against a wall with her. He felt along the wall for the door, the woman struggling with all her might to get away from him. A door was found, but it was closed. He kicked it open, and a terrible blast of flame shot in and completely enveloped him and his charge. It was then he believed it might be his end, but he held on to the woman, not knowing she was the one he had already saved three times. In sheer desperation he rushed across the room and struck another door. It flew open, and he and the woman went tumbling down a flight of stairs to the cellar. The place was full of smoke, and bits of burning flooring were falling through to the ground floor of the cellar. The woman gave him no further trouble. He laid her in a corner and said:

"Wait here till I can find a way to get out. If I can't, we'll be baked meat in a very few minutes."

She said nothing, but buried her face in her hands, and sat as still as a stump. He looked about him, and saw an ax lying on the cemented floor. Taking it up, he looked around to get his bearings. Then, as soon as he had done so, he attacked the foundation wall between him and the next house. His immense strength enabled him to strike terrible blows. The stones and mortar fairly crumbled at each blow. In five minutes he had knocked a hole through the wall as large as a flour barrel. Then he dropped the ax and went to the woman, saying as he caught her in his arms:

"Come! Here's a way of escape!" and he tried to make her go through the hole. She resisted, and he had to use force and rough handling, shoving her through the hole as unceremoniously as he would have done with a pig. Then he followed her, and found himself in another cellar that was very dark and foul smelling. But the air in there was free from smoke, and that was a very great relief indeed.

"You can breathe better now?" he said to the woman.

She looked at him in a dazed sort of way, but made no re-

ply. It was too dark in there for him to see her face so as to recognize her.

"We must get out of here," he said. "The house may burn down, too," and then he turned to look for the steps that led up to the door. None were there! He quickly ascertained the fact that none had been built there—that it had never been used as a cellar at all. The house was built on the four foundation walls, and so the cellar was a dungeon in everything but name.

"Well, this is queer!" he exclaimed. "I don't know what to make of it."

A crash startled him. The floor of the house he had just left had fallen in—a heap of blazing timber.

"The ax!" he exclaimed. "I must get that!" and he sprang to the opening he had made in the foundation wall. He had left the ax lying right under it. But when he reached for it his hand struck nought but fire. In sheer desperation he leaned through, scattered the burning timber and secured the ax. The handle was actually burning.

"This is the worst I ever struck," he said to himself. "I've got to cut another hole in the opposite wall," and he went at it like a woodchopper. He dealt powerful blows, and the stones and mortar fell at his feet. Fast and furious rained the blows, and in a little while he made an opening into the cellar of the third house. A few more blows and he had enlarged it till he could pass through it. Then he again turned to the woman, who now seemed perfectly docile. She went through without any trouble as soon as she knew what he wanted her to do. Then he followed. Noises overhead told him the occupants were dragging out furniture.

"Here!" he said to the woman, as he caught her by the arm. "We can go up this way," and he ran up the little narrow stairs that led up from the cellar. The door was locked, but a kick sent it flying open.

Some women and men in the hallway looked at him in amazement. A stalwart man seized Tom by the collar and said:

"You are a stranger—what are you doing in my cellar?"

"I am Tom Barry, the fireman. I've brought this woman through from the house that is burning."

"Indeed! And how did you get there from the other house—two doors away?"

"Cut my way through with an ax."

"You are a fireman?"

"Yes."

"Where is your helmet and fireman's shirt?"

"I lost the hat below somewhere, and was at a party when the alarm was given. Now take your hands off me. You have detained me long enough."

"You will come along with me, young man," and he tightened his grip on Tom's collar as he spoke.

Quick as a flash Tom gave him a blow that laid him senseless on the floor. The half dozen women standing by at the time sprang at him and cried for the police.

They pulled his hair and nearly tore the white shirt off him. He could not strike them, so he seized the woman whom he had rescued and ran out of the house with her.

But he made a mistake and ran out into the rear yard. The women pursued him with every conceivable kind of weapon and pelted him mercilessly, screaming:

"Stop thief! Stop thief!"

Several men who were assisting in removing furniture from the house ran to their aid, and Tom sung out:

"Hold up! Hold up! I am Tom Barry, the fireman!"

"Barry, be blowed!" yelled a brawny fellow, springing upon him. "You are a thief!"

Tom made short work of him and two others. Then he sprang over the fence into the rear yard of the house that

fronted on the next street, leaving his rescued woman with his assailants.

"They are worse than the fire," he laughed, as he ran to the rear door of the house. Heads were protruding from every window.

"Will you let me pass through to the street?" he asked, looking up at the woman in the window.

"Yes," said one, and a man was sent down to open the door for him.

"What's the matter over there?" the man asked him.

"The women are excited and wouldn't let me pass through."

"Well, come this way," and the man let him out at the front door.

"Thank you, sir," said Tom, as he ran down the street to go round the block. In a couple of minutes he was round in the other street among the crowd of people who were looking on at the conflagration, and bewailing the fate of the brave fireman.

"What fireman is lost?" he asked a bystander.

"Tom Barry! He went in there half an hour ago and hasn't been seen since," was the reply.

"What a pity!"

"Pity! He was worth all the firemen in the city!" said another.

Just then he saw Judge Macomb come out of the house in front of which he was trying to get through to his engine.

"Hello, judge!" he sung out. "What are you doing down here?"

"Lord bless my soul!" gasped the judge. "There's Barry, alive and well!"

"Oh, there he is! There's Mr. Barry!" screamed a half dozen girls of the judge's party, and then several ran back into the house to tell Minnie, who had come to again and was waiting till a carriage could be sent for.

"Oh, he is alive! I've seen him! He is safe! Oh, I'm so glad!" and Minnie sprang to her feet and ran out of the door, to land in the arms of her father.

CHAPTER XII.

"BACK TO YOUR POSTS, BOYS! I'M ALL RIGHT!"

Tom was eager to get to his engine, and let the brave boys know he was yet in the land of the living. He looked up at Judge Macomb and said:

"Yes. I am alive and well, judge, but it was the closest call I ever had. I must get to my boys!" and he pushed through the crowd with such energy as to upset several people.

Somebody in the crowd recognized him and sung out:

"Barry! Barry! Here's Barry!"

The sensation was startling. Everybody wanted to see him, and know that he had really escaped alive. They climbed up everywhere they could to get a glimpse of him. When he passed into the open space, held by the firemen, they sent up a cheer that was heard many blocks away. He was bare-headed, and his white shirt was in rags, torn by the women in the third house below the fire, who mistook him for a thief. The boys of No. 4 sprang from their engine to embrace him in their joy. The fire chief yelled through his trumpet:

"Keep to your work, No. 4!"

"Back to your posts, boys!" cried Tom. "I am all right. We've got work to do yet!"

No. 1 was working close by, but not one of them cheered him when he reappeared. Nos. 2 and 3, on the right and left, cheered loudly when they heard that he had turned up alive and all right.

The firemen had hard work to save the rest of the block. Three houses were destroyed, the old frames burning like tinder. They had to stay there nearly all night lest the fire start up again.

But when the women who had assailed him so savagely saw him with the firemen, directing the boys of No. 4, they were dumfounded. They had attacked the man who had saved more women and children from the flames than any dozen other firemen in the city.

"I didn't know it was him!" cried one of them. "He had no helmet nor fireman's shirt. How could we know him?"

But one of the men whom he had knocked down in the back yard of the house swore he'd be avenged. He said Barry could have made himself known had he wanted to, but he wanted to use his brute strength on everybody in sight.

Judge Macomb had a time of it in getting his party of young ladies away. They wanted to see Barry themselves before they would return home, they said, and they stood upon the stoop of the house and gazed until they saw him. Minnie was in a state of great mental and physical excitement. The judge had to assist her to the carriage that finally came for her. The others walked back with the judge, three going with her.

"The shock was too much for her," he said to one of the girls, as he walked along with them.

"Oh, it was an awful shock to all of us," said the young lady, "for he had just left us and ran into such a horrible death. How in the world did he escape, when no one could see him come out of the fire?"

"We'll know all that in time, my dear, when he can explain it to us," the judge said.

"His dress suit must have been ruined," said another young lady.

"He had on no coat or vest," said another, "and his shirt was nearly torn off him."

"Yes, yes. Guess he didn't have time to get his fireman's clothes."

When they reached the home of the judge, they found that Minnie had been put to bed. The girls were sent to their homes in their carriages, and the judge and his wife had a consultation over the swooning of their daughter.

"I fear it means that she has fallen in love with him," said he, shaking his head.

"I fear so, too," admitted the mother.

"What is to be done? We cannot let that go on, you know. He is a poor cabinet-maker. Yet we cannot cease to be grateful to him for saving her life."

"Send her to Europe—for her health," suggested the mother.

"But will she go?"

"Let me take her."

"Very well. But how will it be when she comes back?"

"I'll stay away till he marries some other girl. There'll be so many after him he will soon be captured."

"Very well. I am sorry to have you go, but it seems to be the only way. Above all things, don't let her know the object of the trip. You know she has a will of her own, and if she knew, she would not go."

The next day she was seriously ill, and the family physician was sent for. The judge gave him the cue. He advised them to visit certain springs in Europe, as she was threatened with nervous prostration.

In the meantime Barry had told how he escaped from what seemed to be certain death. The fire chief, and others, investigated and found the two holes made in the foundation walls by the ax in his hands. It seemed marvelous that he should have cut his way out as he did.

"But who is the woman?" he asked. "I took her out four

times. Nobody seemed to be able to hold her. She must be insane."

The chief ordered an investigation, and, strange to say, the woman could not be found. Tom told where he left her among the women who attacked him in that back yard. No one seemed to know anything about her. The women said she ran through the house and mingled with the crowd in the street as soon as Tom left her among his assailants. The men who had tried to hold her, when Tom brought her out of the fire, said that she seemed to have the strength of two men—that she wrenched loose from them with the greatest ease, and ran back into the burning house ere any one could stop her.

"I was not fool enough to follow her," said one of the men.

Her identity and whereabouts became a question, and the police of the city were ordered to find her. They made a thorough search for her, but all in vain, and she drifted into a mystery that was never solved other than by the belief that she again ran into the fire, unperceived, and perished there, a poor demented creature.

But where did she come from? Hundreds saw her, but no one recognized her.

The families in the houses that were burned claimed that they had never seen her before that night. They also said that they could give no explanation of how the fire started.

"Then she was a wandering crank who set the house afire," said Tom, and that theory was accepted by nearly everybody in Barrington.

The fact that he wore dress trousers and a white shirt at the fire caused no little comment, and so the story got out that he was a guest at the residence of Judge Macomb when the alarm was given. From that the gossips and busybodies began to weave a romance for him and the belle of Barrington, to the no small annoyance of the judge and his wife. But the judge was a brave man. He went straight to Tom, who was at work at his bench, and said:

"You must let me buy you another dress suit, Barry."

"Why should I?" Tom asked him, looking him full in the face.

"Because my daughter was the cause of your buying it in the first place, and in the second, because the city or somebody ought to make it good to you. And a third reason is that it would be a pleasure to me to do so."

"That settles it," laughed Tom. "I did not intend to buy another, for the same thing might happen again the first time I put it on."

"Very true, and that is but a good reason why you should let your friends pay for them," and the judge left the money with him with which to pay for the suit.

That very day Tom received a note from one of the young ladies, inviting him to make one of a party of young people to meet at her home on the following Tuesday evening. She also congratulated him on his escape from a horrible death at the late fire. Maggie, the daughter of his landlady, was looking at him as he read it.

"It's a lady's handwriting," she said, as he folded it up and put it into his pocket.

"Yes, it's from a lady, and he looked at her and smiled. She laughed and said:

"You won't tell me who she is, will you?"

"No. A gentleman should never do such a thing, should he?"

"No," and she seemed a bit put out with herself for asking the question.

Half an hour later a boy brought a note to the house for him. Maggie took it to him, saying:

"Here's one from a man this time."

"Thank you for bringing it up, Maggie," he replied.

It was a note purporting to come from one of the members of No. 4, asking him to come to him at once at his house, as he had something important to tell him—something he ought to know. He at once prepared to go, little dreaming what was in store for him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TERRIBLE EFFECT OF THE SANDBAG.

Tom left his boarding-house at about 8:30 o'clock and started off down a little dark street, making a short cut to the home of Jerry Sullivan, the one from whom he received the note. He had gone about two blocks, and was turning a corner, when a blow on the back of the head sent him reeling into the gutter.

"Got him that time, by all that's holy!" he heard a voice say, and then another blow was struck at his head as he lay on the ground. The blow simply grazed his head, and served to suddenly bring him to.

He sprang to his feet and seized one of two men whom he ran up against. The other one aimed a blow at his head with what seemed to him, in the dark, to be a club as big as his arm. He wheeled, and the blow landed on the head of the man he had seized. He heard him give a groan, and felt him weaken and sink down to the ground.

Letting go of him, he sprang at the one with the club and caught him by the collar. With his right hand he dealt him a terrific blow in the face. The man groaned and would have fallen, but Tom held him up and gave him a half dozen blows on the face, neck, and on the chest. Then he let him drop.

Both were lying still and silent on the ground, and he stood there waiting for them to get up and renew their attentions to him. But after some minutes they were still silent and motionless.

"I guess they have enough," he said. "I'll go on and see Jerry. Maybe they will wait here for me and try it on again. Hope they will," and he went on to the home of Jerry Sullivan.

"Lord, but my head swims," he said. "It was a sock-dollager they gave me. It must have been a sandbag they hit me with, for it felt like a thunderbolt."

At Jerry's home he found that he was not there—had gone out immediately after supper.

"He sent me a note to come here at once," he said to Jerry's father.

"When?" the old man asked.

"Half an hour ago."

"He didn't send it from here, then, for he has been out nearly two hours."

"Well, tell him I called, please."

"Yes, so I will," and Tom turned away and started back the way he had come. But at the next corner he felt so queerly he decided to go to the hospital and have his hurt examined.

"I may be worse hurt than I know," he said, "and they'll tell me there."

In ten minutes more he reeled into the hospital and said:

"I've been hit on the head and feel queerly, doctor. Please tell me if there is any harm done."

"Let me see," and the doctor made an examination of his head.

"Why, this looks like a blow from a sandbag! How did it happen?"

Tom told him and he said:

"You must lie down and be quiet. Here, come this way,"

and the doctor led him to a room and assisted him to undress and get to bed. In a little while he was in semi-conscious condition. The doctor knew what remedies to use, and lost no time in applying them. Then he sent for the chief of police and told him what Barry had told him, and no time was lost in making a search for the assailants of the young fireman.

The two were found lying where they had fallen, by an officer.

"Hanged if I don't believe both are dead!" exclaimed the officer, as he undertook to arouse them. They seemed so, and he summoned help to have them removed to the police station. There a surgeon pronounced them both dead—one killed by a sandbag blow, and the other by the blows given on face, neck and chest, by Tom Barry.

It was near midnight when the discovery was made, yet half the city knew it before morning, so great was the sensation that followed it. The morning papers had a brief mention of it, and hundreds of people visited the station to see the bodies of the villains, and as many more to the hospital to hear how Barry was. He was able to tell his story to the chief of police, who immediately sent for Jerry Sullivan. That young fireman denied that he had sent any note to Tom, and it was soon found that the handwriting was not his.

"It was a ruse to lure him to his death," said the chief, "and fate turned it into an instrument for their own taking off. One killed the other by a blow intended for Barry, and then Barry finished him by a few blows with his fist. Lord, what blows they were! Two ribs were broken and so was his neck. His fist is a sledge hammer!"

The entire city was thrown into a furor of excitement when all the particulars became known to the people. No one could indentify the two dead men, though more than two thousand people looked at the bodies during the day.

"Well, I know I hit him hard," said Tom at the hospital, when told that the man was dead, "for I was mad. They waylaid me in a cowardly manner and so I have no regrets. It was a miracle that I escaped being done for, and——"

"There are two ladies here to see you, sir," said an attendant, entering the room. Tom was seated in an arm-chair, propped with pillows.

"Two ladies! Well, ask the doctor about it."

Just then the doctor came in with Minnie Macomb and another young lady. Miss Macomb ran to him, knelt by the chair, looked up into his face and said:

"I have come to nurse you, my friend! Don't send me away. Oh, why do they try to kill you!" and her eyes filled with tears.

"They haven't quite succeeded, my sweet friend," he said, with a faint smile. "It is kind of you to come to me, and I thank you for a glimpse of your face. How beautiful you are! All the time I was unconscious your face was floating before me. It is the only thing I can remember. It was like a dream," and he laid his hand on her head as he spoke. Her face lit up with a light of joy and happiness.

"No, I won't send you away," he added, as if talking to himself. "I would kill a thousand men to keep you! I could never die with your face before me, for it is the face of an angel, and angels live always, and are always beautiful—oh, how beautiful!" and his hand wandered all over her face as he spoke. Then he caught her hands in both of his and held them, looking in her eyes like one in a dream. "You are the only angel I ever saw, and how beautiful you are—how beautiful!" and again he felt her face. She suddenly seemed to be in a state of terror.

"Doctor—doctor!" she gasped. "He is out of his head! Oh, save him—save him who saves others!" and she tried to spring up, but he held to her hands with a vise-like grip.

"You must not leave me!" he said. "I would die if you left me! As long as I see you I'll live! There is life in your beautiful face! I snatched you from the flames that you might some day save me and give me new life. Your smiles make my heart dance with joy—fills my soul with life, and gives me the strength of a giant!"

Two doctors, an attendant and the companion of Minnie Macomb listened with bated breaths. They saw he was out of his head, and tried to get her away from him. But he held her hands tightly, and one of the doctors had to administer an opiate. Soon he slept, and then his hold relaxed, and she rose to her feet, threw herself into the arms of her companions and burst into tears.

The matron was called and she led the two ladies to another room.

"Give me a nurse's cap and apron," said Minnie. "I won't leave him. I'll stay and nurse him. He loves me—wants me—wants me to stay by him and I will."

"I fear your presence would make him worse," said the matron.

"No—he said he could never die as long as I was with him! I won't leave him! I won't leave him!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FAITHFUL NURSE.

The change that had come over young Barry the moment he saw Miss Macomb was alarming. The doctors said it was proof of the force of the blow he had received on the head, and that he was really in a dangerous condition. Minnie Macomb refused to leave the hospital, and as her father was one of the heaviest contributors to its support, the surgeons decided to let her stay. Her companion drove to the judge's home and told where she was and what had happened there. In great alarm Mrs. Macomb hastened to the hospital and tried to persuade her to return home. But she flatly refused, saying:

"He saved my life, and I'll save his."

"But the surgeons will do that," urged her mother.

"I will help them. A nurse is as useful as a doctor."

"But you are not a trained nurse," said her mother. "You have no experience, my child."

"Never mind that, mother. I can be with him, and that will do him good. Oh, he begged me not to leave him, and I won't!"

"But he was out of his head."

"True, but the wish was in his soul and heart. Go home, mother. I am going to stay here."

The mother went in quest of Judge Macomb and he, too, came and urged in vain that she go home with her mother. She threw her arms around his neck, kissed him and said:

"Father, you never taught me to be ungrateful when I was a little girl, and it is too late to begin now. I am going to nurse him here till he is out of danger. Don't urge me to leave him. Don't have any fears for me, either. He never left me when the fierce flames were devouring me, and I won't leave him now, when he says he could not die with me near him."

The judge turned to his wife and said he believed the girl was right, and that she could stay so far as he was concerned. Then the mother burst into tears, and Minnie left the room to avoid a scene. The result was, the father and mother went home without the daughter.

Of course, the young lady with her repeated the scene she had witnessed to all her friends, and a romance of the truest

type was talked of in every circle of society in Barrington. Every young lady applauded her and none blamed her. But the story of what he had said in his delirium assumed new colorings with each repetition.

In the meantime the police were making great efforts to find out who the two dead sandbaggers were. They had pictures of them taken and published, but to no effect. If any friends of the dead men saw them, they wisely kept mum, not willing to have it known that they had such friends. They were buried and marked head boards told the brief story of the "unknown dead."

In a few days Tom came to and found Minnie Macomb at his bedside, with the matron of the hospital. Hers was the first face he recognized.

"Ah! You have been here all the time," he said. "I saw you in my sleep. I see you all the time, and always so beautiful."

"The fever is broken," said the matron, "and you'll soon be up now."

"Have I had a fever?" he asked.

"Yes, for several days."

"And I didn't know it."

"No. You didn't know anything or anybody. A great many of your friends called to see you, but they had to go away without seeing you."

"I have some very good friends," said he.

"Yes, and none more true than Miss Macomb. She has nursed you day and night for four days."

"She's an angel."

Minnie had gone out of the room and did not hear what was said, for she feared he would say things to her which she did not wish the matron to hear.

"What has been done about those two men?" he asked.

"Did they find out who they were?"

"No—they have not as yet. They have been buried."

"Ah! And that is the end of them. They came near taking me along with them. I don't regret killing that fellow."

"I am sure no one else does," the matron remarked.

The doctor came in, accompanied by Minnie. She had gone after him.

"Ah! You are all right now, Barry," greeted the physician.

"All you need is rest and quiet."

"And my angel nurse here," Tom added, taking Minnie's hand in his. "I can't get well without her, doctor."

"You must not be too exacting, my dear boy. She has been with you night and day for over one hundred hours. She has not your iron constitution. She is now on the verge of nervous prostration. She must go home and rest."

"Yes, you are right, doctor. She must go home, and—God bless her! She's an angel, doctor!"

"That's what everyone says," laughed the doctor. "Tell her good-by now and let her go."

"May I call every day and see him, doctor?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, of course. He is as much your patient as mine."

"Do you hear that?" she laughed. "You have two physicians, you see."

"Yes, and you are the best of the two. I beg pardon,

doctor. You give me some nasty stuff to take, and she does not."

They both laughed, and then Tom kissed her hand and said:

"Go home and rest."

She turned and left the room. An hour later she was at home and soundly sleeping—the happiest girl in all Barrington, for she knew in her heart that the brave fireman loved her. He had not told her so, but she knew it just as well.

His recovery was rapid. His iron constitution and will power pulled him through. Miss Macomb called every day with her mother, and spent half an hour each time with him. Other friends called, too, among them many ladies. Little Maggie Morrison was one of them, and he was grateful to her.

But the boys of No. 4 were preparing a great reception for him when he should appear in their midst; and the members of Nos. 2 and 3 had joined in the programme. No. 1 did not feel called upon to bother themselves about it at all. They had hired a hall and decorated it in the most elaborate manner, and an open reception was to take place there on Wednesday evening.

He knew nothing about it, and so, when he left the hospital on Monday, he went to his boarding-house. Maggie and her mother had made everything cozy for him.

"I am glad to get home again," he said to the widow, "and hope to get to work again in a few days. Everyone has been kind to me—so much so I have a heavy feeling of obligation resting upon me."

"Such obligations are not hard to bear," said the widow. "One can love his friends and they can love him, and all be happy together."

On Wednesday evening the boys of No. 4 called with the old engine. They forced him to put on a new fireman's suit and go out for a ride on the old fire squelcher.

He was in high spirits, and went along with them, little dreaming where they were taking him.

They halted in front of a big hall where Nos. 2 and 3 also stood, and a band of firemen cheered him.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "What's up, boys?"

"Oh, we are having a little racket upstairs," said the foreman of No. 2, "and we have been waiting for you. Come up, old man!" and they seized him and bore him upstairs on their shoulders. Inside the hall he found nearly a thousand people, old and young, who set up a vociferous cheering when they saw him. They bore him all round the big hall, and he saw many familiar faces in the crowd. The mayor and all the aldermen were there, and they were the first to grasp his hand when he was placed on his feet.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH TOM IS MADE FIRE CHIEF.

"Well, this is a surprise, indeed!" Tom exclaimed. "What's it all about, anyhow?"

"Well, it's about you, my boy!" said the mayor, as he shook his hands. "Your friends have come here to have some fun

with you. The aldermen have voted to build a fire engine house for No. 4. Then they elected you chief of the fire department."

"What?" gasped Tom.

"Yes, you are now chief of the fire department, with the salary that goes with it—\$1,500 a year."

"But the old chief isn't dead yet!" he exclaimed. "I won't have it. He is my friend and——"

"But he has resigned to take a better paying place," explained the mayor.

"Then that's all right. Just tell me how I am to thank you and the aldermen, Mr. Mayor, and I'll do my best to do so."

"You can say what you please when we swear you in, and we are going to do that right away. That's what we are here for."

"Well, you have taken me at a disadvantage. It's a surprise party, and I don't know how I am going to pull myself together to say what I would like to say."

"Oh, that's all right, my boy," laughed the mayor. "I guess you are used to surprises; and you have given us a few surprises since you became a fireman, and we have come back at you just a little bit."

By that time a crowd of women, old and young, had crowded around him to shake his hand and congratulate him on his escape from the sandbaggers. He thanked them and had a pleasant word for each one.

After a while the board of Aldermen took seats on the platform and the mayor presided. Tom was called up, notified of his election as chief of the fire department of Barrington, and asked if he accepted the position. On saying that he would, he was immediately sworn into office. The crowd cheered him as he took the oath.

Said he:—"Mr. Mayor, aldermen and friends: You have given me the greatest surprise of my life, and filled me with feelings of pride and gratitude. I cannot find words to adequately express to you the sentiments that fill my heart. All I can do is to express to you my thanks, coupled with the promise to try to do my whole duty in the position to which you have assigned me. However long I may live I can never forget this scene, for in the faces before me I see only good will and friendship and it goes straight to my heart. I came among you a total stranger. You have taken me by the hand, and raised me up that I might stand among you as one of yourselves. Hence I am 'Barry of Barrington,' and your friends shall be my friends, your God my God, and whatever your fate may be that shall be mine also. If the flames compass you round about I shall try to rescue you from them, and may the future bring us joy and contentment; may the battle of life lose its fierceness, and peace and plenty come with the years that flow on toward the end of time. To you, Mr. Mayor, and Honorable Aldermen, my humble respects—to you, gentlemen of this audience, my hand in honorable friendship. To you, mothers, daughters and sisters, love, loyalty and honest admiration for your womanly motherhood and queenly rule in the household and in the hearts of men. Even unto death by fire will I follow to serve you. I have a mother in Heaven whose memory I worship, for she was all that a

mother should be. I had a beautiful sister, but she sleeps at the bottom of the ocean—for their sake I love and revere the name of woman. That is why I count my life as nothing when I see a woman or girl in peril. Again I thank each and all of you for your kindness," and he bowed all round as he finished.

The very roof trembled from the applause that greeted him. It was a simple speech, but it was honest, came from his heart and seemed to touch every heart in the house. The women were captured en masse. Some of them wept at his brief mention of his dead mother and sister. How beautiful his tribute to his mother—"She was all that a mother should be!" It went straight home to every mother in that audience, and there were many of them there. They seemed to want to let him know how they felt, and many did tell him after he came down and mingled with them.

As he was shaking hands with a party of women, he suddenly found himself face to face with Minnie Macomb and a dozen of her friends.

"Oh," he said, "I am so glad to see you! What a surprise!" and he shook hands with her and all her friends.

"We got here in time to hear your speech," she said, laughing. "Really I think you ought to be a lawyer. Father has said so a dozen times."

"Indeed! I have more respect for his judgment than any man I know. If I thought I could make such a lawyer as he is, I would try to be one."

"You should talk to him about it," she said.

"What a surprise you have all given me to-night!" he said to the party of young ladies. "What a compliment you have paid me. There is such a thing as ruining a fellow, you know—making his head swell up and——"

"Oh, your head is too hard for that," laughed one of the girls. "They say it's as hard as iron."

"Well, if it wasn't I wouldn't be alive to-day," he said.

"Well, if a sandbag can't ruin your head, I am sure we girls can't!"

"Ah! you don't come at a fellow like a sandbagger. You hit his head first, and then his head softens—see?" and the girls laughed heartily at the way he put it.

Music and dancing went on till midnight, and Tom danced with Minnie and her friends. Then he danced with many other girls—factory girls, shop girls, servant girls. He was impartial and treated all alike, hence his popularity with them.

When he left the hall to go home, the boys of No. 4 again took charge of him. They placed him on the old engine and pulled it through the streets to their old quarters. There he resigned his place as foreman, but retained his membership.

"I'll never belong to any other fire company, boys," he said, "and I am going to meet with you here as often as I can. I am young for such a place as chief, but we boys have shown that we are as efficient firemen as some men who have long beards. You are going to keep the place you have won, for I know the spirit that moves you. I am with you in all your work as firemen, and every member of old No. 4 can call his chief his friend."

It was a long time ere he got away from the boys, and even then they accompanied him to his home in a body. He bade them good-night, and they gave him a cheer that awoke every sleeper in the block.

The next day Tom resigned his place in the cabinet works and took possession of the office to which he had been elected. He spent the day getting an insight of his duties. That very evening a fire took place in a row of cheap tenement buildings and was so fierce as to threaten the destruction of a great deal of very valuable property. One of the houses was vacant, and it was in that one the fire originated. Tom reached there even with the first company, which was No. 2, and found the whole house in flames, with the smell of oil very strong in the smoke.

"That house was set on fire," he said to himself, "and I am going to find out about it."

Four houses were destroyed ere it could be checked. No lives were lost, owing to the fact that it was an empty house. Tom learned the next day that the houses belonged to one Moyer, and that each house was insured to its full value. He had been trying to sell them for months. Then he began a systematic inquiry among the tenants in the block, and found two men and one woman who said they had seen Mr. Moyer, their landlord, leave the vacant house just a few minutes before the fire broke out there. But they did not suspect anything wrong in that, as he was in the habit of visiting his houses daily.

But Tom followed up the clew and soon had enough evidence, but of a circumstantial nature, to warrant him in reporting his suspicions to the insurance companies. Coming from the chief of the fire department, it had a tremendous effect on the insurance companies; they refused to pay and Moyer promptly sued. His lawyer soon learned that the fire chief had practically charged his client with having set fire to his property in order to get the insurance.

Moyer turned pale on hearing of it, and made no remark other than to say he would see about it.

Tom was seated in his office, reading a letter from one of the insurance companies, when Moyer entered. He was a big burly fellow, with a bulldog expression of countenance.

"Barry, my name is Moyer," he said, as he confronted the young fire chief. Tom had never seen him before.

"Ah! I've heard of you before. Take a seat, sir."

"No; I want an explanation of you about that fire, and your statement that I started it."

"It seems to me that an explanation should come from you," said Tom, "as you were there a few minutes before the fire started."

"That's a lie!" hissed Moyer, stepping fiercely up to him.

CHAPTER XVI.

"IT'S WORSE THAN A FIRE!"

Tom seemed just the least bit surprised at Moyer's words and vehemence. But he smiled and remarked:

"I made the statement on the evidence of three respectable people, who said they saw you there."

"They lied. They never saw me there."

"Do you mean to say you were not there?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then the question of veracity is between them and you. They are said to be respectable people."

"Who are they?" Moyer demanded, very brusquely.

"Go and ask the district-attorney. I am not at liberty to tell you myself."

"What has the district-attorney to do with it?"

"The evidence has been placed in his hands to lay before the grand jury."

Moyer turned pale.

He didn't know it had gone so far.

"Who gave him the evidence?" he asked.

"I did."

"Why did you not give me a chance to explain anything?"

"Because I had no right to call on you for anything. I am not a trial officer."

"Yet you have sought to ruin my character behind my back, giving me no chance to——"

"Hold on a moment, Mr. Moyer," said Tom, interrupting him. "If you will show me that I have pursued any other than the strict legal course in such matters, I'll make you a written apology. Can you do that?"

"Why, you never gave me a chance to make any explanation."

"It's the province of the district-attorney to do that—not mine. It's my duty to report what I find out about the origin of fires—and that I have done."

"And reported, behind my back, to the insurance companies that I was suspected of——"

"Was it not my duty to do so?"

"No—you exceeded your duty. You slandered me like a coward behind my——"

"That'll do now. You had better get out of here, or you may have to go to the hospital."

"You can't send me there."

Tom smiled, but made no answer. He kept an eye on the man, though, for he was satisfied he had come in for a row.

"I say you can't send me there," Moyer repeated.

"I have no desire to," said Tom; "but if you don't leave this office in sixty seconds I'll throw you out."

"Well, I'll wait for you to throw me out."

Tom looked up at the clock on the wall and took off his cuffs. Then he removed his coat, laid it on a chair, and by that time the minute was up. He sprang at Moyer, who put up a guard. He hit him on the jaw and smashed the bones. Down went the fool, and then Tom opened the door and flung him out. He was taken up and sent to the hospital. He could not talk and explain how it happened, so Tom did that himself, to the mayor and chief of police.

The grand jury indicted Moyer for arson, and he gave bonds for his appearance while yet confined to the bed in the hospital. He had some friends, and a number of relations who were very bitter in their denunciation of the "young bully in the fire department."

One of the former was a man named Fuller, who was court-

ing Moyer's daughter. He was a powerful young fellow who had the reputation of being the best man, from a physical standpoint, in his ward. He remarked in the presence of Moyer's wife and daughter that if he ever met Tom Barry on the street he'd lick him.

"If you will I'll marry you the next day," said the daughter. He had been begging her to marry him for months.

"Get ready to marry to-morrow, then," said he, "for I'll wait for him in front of his boarding-house this evening and pound him till he cries 'enough.'"

"I don't need to get ready. I'll go with you to the minister's just as I am."

He went off and hunted up two of his friends, told them of the job he had on his hands, and enlisted them in his cause. They were to go along to see fair play, and lend a helping hand, if he should need it, and give him the sole credit of the victory.

It was about six o'clock when they met Tom in front of the Widow Morrison's. Fuller had taken a few drinks, and was full of both "Dutch" and "bulldog" courage. He jostled Tom rudely as he met him, and the latter said:

"Hello! What are you up to?"

"What's the matter with you?" Fuller demanded.

"What's the trouble with you?" Tom retorted.

"That's what's the matter!" hissed the bully, aiming a furious blow at his face.

Quick as a flash Tom parried the blow, and gave him one on the nose that sent him reeling into the middle of the street, where he sank down in a heap to make some observations of dancing stars by daylight.

Instantly the other two dashed at him, only to be served in the same way—each man having his nose smashed flat against his face. All three noses were broken, and what beauty they ever had was forever destroyed. A broken nose can be healed, but the form is never restored.

Tom turned them over to the police, and then went in to dinner, without even having soiled his hands or his dress ruffled.

There was no marriage in the Moyer family the next day. On the contrary three physicians had employment on as many noses, for which they were paid at the rate of ten dollars a nose. Then the owners of the three noses had to pay ten dollars each as a fine for disorderly conduct.

Somebody told the story of Fuller's promised reward if he succeeded in thrashing the young fire chief, and the whole city laughed at him. The young woman's friends had to make a denial in her behalf. But Tom remarked that had he known that she wanted to marry, he would have taken the thrashing to oblige her. The remark was repeated to her by some unwise friend, and in her anger she threatened to horse-whip him. On hearing that he remarked that he would make no resistance to an attack from her or any other woman.

In the meantime the committee to raise funds to build a monument to the memory of Hugh Dalton had raised ten thousand dollars, and the monument was to be unveiled in a beautiful part of the city cemetery. By unanimous consent Tom was chosen to deliver the oration, and all the fire com-

panies of Barrington were to parade, and then march to the cemetery.

"This won't do," said Tom, when told of his selection as orator. "I never made a speech in my life. I couldn't do it!"

"But they all say you must, and you know what that means," said the chairman of the committee. "They say you can talk well enough, and that you'll have to do it."

"Well, it's worse than a fire—worse than a sandbag!" he said. "I'd rather resign and leave town than do it," and he shook his head. "I'll see if I can get the mayor or Judge Macomb to take my place," and he went to them. They both declined, and advised him to do his best.

"You are just the man to do it, my dear sir," said the judge, "for we all think that you alone know what to say about the duty and perils of a fireman's life."

"Well, I suppose I shall have to try it, but I know it will be a lamentable failure," and he returned to his office to ponder over it.

CHAPTER XVII.

TWO HEARTS THAT BEAT AS ONE.

The selection of Tom Barry as the orator of the day, when the monument over the grave of Hugh Dalton was to be unveiled, was very satisfactory to all the firemen except those of No. 1. They spoke out freely and said the committee had made a mistake—that a man of an established reputation as an orator should have been chosen. Said their foreman:

"Barry is a fine fellow and a splendid fireman. But on an occasion like this, when an entire city turns out to hear an address, we should have a learned man to hold the attention of a multitude of educated people. The members of No. 1 will be in the parade and do their whole duty as members of the city's fire department, but they feel that a great mistake has been made. As they have no responsibility in the matter, however, they have nothing to say."

Of course, Tom heard of it, and from that moment he made up his mind to try to make a speech he need not be ashamed of. Every spare moment of his time was devoted to the preparation of it. He had ten days in which to arrange it, and inside of five days he had it ready. Then within two days he had it fully memorized.

One day he met Minnie Macomb on the street in her carriage. She stopped, and signalled to him. He went to her side, when she asked:

"Will I have to have another fire at our home in order to get a visit from you?"

"No, I've been worried to death, almost, over that speech. It's worse than two fires."

She laughed and said:

"You have my sympathies. I have seen father worried in the same way. It's a good sign, though."

"In what way?" he asked.

"It's a sign that you are trying to make up a good one."

"Oh! Trying is one thing, and succeeding is another."

"Can I help you in any way?"

"Yes, very much."

"I am sure I should be glad to do so. Tell me how, please."

"By staying at home that day and not be a witness of my failure."

"Well, I won't promise you that," she laughed. "I wouldn't miss it for my weight in gold."

"And yet I saved your life once," he said, with an air of reproach. "How ungrateful some people are."

"Oh, you can't play that game on me!" she laughed. "I am going to be there on a front seat."

"Nothing is so cruel as a woman," he said.

"Except man," she returned. "How have you treated me—your best friend in all the wide world? You have been chief of the fire department a month now, and during all that time you have not called on me."

"Do you know that it offends your mother to have me call?" he asked, in a half whisper, lest the coachman should hear.

She seemed startled for a few moments, and then asked:

"Has she said anything to you about it?"

"Only with her eyes, but they spoke loud enough, I'm sure."

"Mr. Barry, do you believe my mother is an ungrateful woman?"

"No. Gratitude does not call for the letting down the social barriers. She is grateful enough, but she does not care to have me visit her daughter."

"Do you wish to visit the daughter?" she asked, laying a hand on his arm and looking up into his face.

"Yes, above all things on earth."

"Then come and see me. I have a will of my own."

"That would make trouble, I fear," and he shook his head.

"Let it make trouble. I have an independent fortune of my own and can dictate terms. Will you come?"

"When I have seen you again—yes, and he looked in the direction of the coachman.

"You can see me any time you wish and anywhere," she said.

"Can you come to the monument this afternoon at, say five o'clock?"

"Yes."

"Then do so. I wish to tell you something."

"I'll be there at five o'clock."

Then she drove away, and Tom returned to his office.

That afternoon at five o'clock he was at the monument which stood over the grave of Hugh Dalton, looking at the workmen arranging the seats and platform for the great occasion so near at hand. There were over a score of people about when Minnie Macomb drove up and alighted from her carriage. They all knew who she was, and Tom raised his hat and bowed to her. Then he joined her and led her about, showing her the arrangements that were being made, making it appear as though the meeting was quite by accident. After some time spent about the monument they wandered off along a shaded walk.

She was leaning on his arm, as they walked, listening to what he was saying. Suddenly he turned to her and said:

"I hope you have had no quarrel with your mother on my account."

"I have not," she replied. "She has been urging me for more than two months to go to Europe with her. She says that both she and I need the waters of a certain famous spring in Germany, and our family physician has told he so, too. But I have refused to go, as I am not in ill-health, though I am not strong. I prefer to stay at home among my friends. That is the only quarrel we have had, and I am sure that no angry feelings were displayed."

"Did your father urge you to go, too?" Tom asked.

"No. He simply said if mother wished to go I ought to go with her."

"What did you say to him?"

"I simply remarked that we had as good springs in this country as Europe had, and that she could find plenty of them within a day's travel of our home—that I did not want to cross the ocean at all."

"What a patriotic girl you are!" said Tom.

"I love my country, and am satisfied to live and die in it. Have you any desire to travel?"

"No. When I was unconscious from that blow of the sand-bag, I was wandering all over the earth in my delirium. But everywhere I went I heard your voice calling me back."

"My voice!"

"Yes, clear and distinct; saying 'Come back! Come back, Tom! and I turned and followed the voice over hills, plains and rivers, through dense forests and jungles—ever following the direction from which it came. When I came to, your face was the first one I saw at the hospital. But you did not cease to call me. I never sleep but I hear your voice calling me back. What does it mean, Minnie Macomb? I have obeyed the call, and have come back to know what you wish of me. Will you send me away again?"

"No!" came short and sharp. "It was my heart calling to you. Has your heart come to me, Tom Barry?"

"Yes; it has never been away from you since that day you drove up to the cabinet works and called me out to your carriage. You took it away with you then."

"But I left mine with you," she said. "Do you wish to keep it?"

"Yes, and you with it. Will you let me?"

"Yes, and count myself the happiest woman on earth. I will be your wife, Tom."

"And I will be to you everything a husband should be to his wife, having but one motive in life—your happiness!"

"The life you saved shall be devoted to blessing yours," she added.

"When shall we marry?" she asked, after talking on for some time.

"As soon as I can prepare a home for you. I have but my salary, and——"

"I have houses by the score, and lands and stocks and money—left to me by my grandmother—and when I am yours they are yours."

"I don't want to live on your bounty."

"It won't be mine—it will be yours," she said. "Don't say any more about that. I'll furnish the home, and let you know when I am ready."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"THE CITY OWES YOU ITS LIFE."

When Tom led Minnie Macomb back to her carriage, she had such a happy look in her face that even the workmen there saw and noticed it. She was more beautiful than ever in her life before.

"If Barry doesn't fall in love with that girl he has no heart," said one of the workmen.

"He has heart enough," said another, "and if he isn't dead in love with her already, I am no judge of spoons."

"Have they been spooning?"

"Yes, but blind men like you could never see it."

"Did you see it?"

The other only smiled at the ignorance of his companion.

Tom went home the happiest man in all Barrington that evening. He was singing all the evening up in his room, and the Widow Morrison asked him why he didn't buy a harp.

"I don't need one," he said.

"Why not?"

"Because I'm in love with my voice. A harp would spoil it. Don't you think I have a lovely voice?"

"I think it could be improved some," she laughed.

"Oh, you mean old thing!" he exclaimed. "If I should talk love to you a bit, you'd say it was the sweetest voice you ever heard."

"Indeed, I wouldn't listen to love talk from any man till Maggie has married."

"Does Maggie want to marry?"

"I don't know—most girls do. Go ask her."

"Do you want to marry, Mag?" he asked, in a playful way of the daughter.

"Yes, when the right fellow comes along," Maggie replied.

"Good girl! Tell me the fellow you want, and I'll go out and bring him in to you."

"Oh, he must come without being sent for," she laughed.

"Sensible to the last! Wouldn't have a fireman, I suppose?"

"That depends upon who he is. They are as good as any other, I guess."

"Well, now—I know a fireman, who——"

Clang!

Clang!

Clang!

The great fire bell rang out a call to all the firemen in the city. Tom sprang to his feet, seized his hat, and almost ran over the widow, in his hurried exit from the house. She looked at Maggie and said:

"I do believe he was going to say he knew a fireman who is in love with you! And it's himself, too!"

"I can't believe it, mother," Maggie said. "He has never said a word to me about love except in jest."

"You wouldn't refuse him?"

"No, but he is not in love with me. Of that I am sure."

"Why don't you draw him out?"

"Oh, I couldn't do that, mother."

"Some girls haven't any gumption," remarked the widow. "Others would throw themselves at him so hard as to knock him down."

"Well, I won't throw myself at any man. If a man wants me he must tell me so. I'm no widow."

The mother winced. Then she laughed and went about her work.

It was a great fire that evening in Barrington. It was in a block of warehouses where many thousands of dollars in goods were stored. No lives but those who were trying to save property were endangered. The high wind threatened to carry it to the lower part of the city where the loss of property would have been immense. Once there, during such a wind as was then blowing, the firemen would have been powerless to combat it. As it was, several firemen were injured and one killed. He belonged to No. 2. No. 1 had a position of the greatest responsibility. If the fire passed them, all would be lost.

"No. 2!" Tom sung out to them, "everything south of you depends upon your holding it down at this point! Of all firemen in Barrington, you know the value of property. If all those houses out there belonged to me, I would place you here to save them. If you need help, let me know. Now is the time for everyone to do his best!"

They cheered him—those aristocrats—for they felt his words, and knew he was not flattering them. The terrific conflagration raged with an intensity never seen in Barrington before. The man at the nozzle of No. 1 stood his ground till the smoke went up from his shirt, and his face and hands were blistered.

Tom dashed to his side and said:

"You are a hero, sir! Let me relieve you!" and he took the nozzle from him. In five minutes another relieved him. Those No. 1 men were heroes. They never flinched. They stood by him, and he by them, till the danger was past.

"Gentlemen of No. 1, I salute you!" Tom cried, removing his helmet and bowing low to them. "You are heroes, who would die at your posts, if it were necessary! The city owes you its life!"

"I indorse every word of that!" cried the mayor, who had been a witness of the terrific struggle.

The men were too exhausted to even cheer him. Tom went to each one and shook his hand. They were touched to the heart, though blistered and burnt in many places.

"No. 1! You have saved the town!" Tom cried out as they started for their quarters.

"Three cheers for the chief!" cried the foreman, and every member cheered lustily.

Nearly every man of No. 1 had to have his physician at-

tend him, so badly did the heat serve them. Tom published a card the next day in which he named each member as a hero who stood his ground till the flesh cracked from the effects of the heat, saying:

"I challenge any fire company in the whole world to equal the record of No. 1 of Barrington."

That won them. They were his personal friends ever after that, and so, when the day of the unveiling of the Dalton monument arrived, they were the most eager and loyal friends he had in the parade.

An immense crowd was at the monument to hear the young fireman's oration. They didn't know what sort of an oration it would be, but they knew it would be an honest tribute to the dead fireman. But it astonished all who heard it, for it was an oration, indeed. It was rich in thought and sentiment, profound in learning and eloquent and lofty in tone. It was a revelation to the vast audience, and thousands sat spellbound under the outpouring of a brave heart, loyal in its friendship to the heroic dead.

CHAPTER XIX.

"THE TRANSOM WAS OPEN."

Among those who listened to the oration of the young fireman at the unveiling of the Dalton monument was Minnie Macomb. She never took her gaze from him once during the half hour he spoke. Time and again did he look her straight in the face, as if speaking to her alone, and she seemed to feel that he was. She was his inspiration, though neither seemed to be aware of the fact. With her it was a series of surprises from start to finish. She was spellbound by his deep earnestness and impressive force, and could not help wondering who had aided him in the composition of the speech. When he spoke of the influence of women in man's career, he looked her full in the face and seemed to be telling her what her influence over him was—how she had inspired him to deeds that had more than once put his life in peril.

"From the cradle to the grave woman's hand is on the heart of man!" he exclaimed. "His best efforts in his chosen field are stimulated by her smiles, her friendship, her love and devotion. When she ceases to be in touch with him, his ambition wilts, his energies flag and failure follows. She is Heaven's best gift to man—the finishing touch of God's creative work, and so perfect is that work that all men, from Adam to the last born of earth, admire, love, reverence, worship it."

When the speech ended everyone was satisfied that the committee had made no mistake in their selection of a speaker. The members of No. 1 were as eager to shake his hand and congratulate him as were the members of the other companies.

As soon as he could get to her, he said to Minnie Macomb: "I am glad you were here. You were my inspiration."

"I am glad, too," she said, "for it was a grand speech. You must be a lawyer, Tom."

"I will be whatever you make me."

She smiled, and then others came up and changed the current of their conversation. Among those who came to him was Maggie Morrison, his landlady's daughter, who said:

"Oh, what a splendid speech it was!"

"How could it be otherwise with so many pretty girls looking at me?" he laughed. Then he turned to Minnie, and said:

"Let me introduce to you a good girl, Miss Macomb—Miss Maggie Morrison. I board at her mother's, and she has been good to me. She is good to everybody."

Minnie grasped her hand and kissed her—to Maggie's great astonishment. She had been good to Tom, and that was enough for her to know.

"I am glad to know you, Miss Morrison. I've heard Mr. Barry speak of you often," said Minnie.

"Indeed! Well, I've heard him speak of you, too. I heard him tell another young man you were the most beautiful woman that ever lived."

"Well, now, you've given yourself dead away, Maggie," laughed Tom. "I did say that, but it was in my room, and the door was shut. Where were you? Were you listening somewhere?"

Maggie blushed furiously but said quickly:

"No. The transom was open and everyone on that floor heard you. Listening indeed! I won't be good to you any more, Tom Barry!"

Tom and Minnie laughed, and he added:

"Oh, you can't help being good, Maggie. It's your nature. You couldn't be mean if you tried ever so hard."

"That is the best compliment a gentleman could pay a lady," laughed Minnie. "I'm sure I'd appreciate it myself."

"Oh, he's good at compliments," said Maggie, but she was mollified. She felt proud of the notice Miss Macomb had taken of her. She believed that Tom was eager to show her off to the rich girl whose life he had saved.

Finally Tom escorted Minnie to her carriage and then went to his office, glad that the terrible strain was over at last.

"I am glad I took so much pains with that speech," he said to himself, "and got it all down right before the time came to fire it off."

At his office he found a man waiting to see him. He knew him as one of the Moyer tenants, who had been burned out, and who lost all his household effects in the fire.

"I came to tell you something you ought to know," said the man.

"What is it?" Tom asked.

Sam Ellis and his wife are going to leave Barrington tonight."

"The deuce! Where are they going?"

"Somewhere out West, I think."

"How did they get money for the move?" Tom asked.

"From Moyer's wife."

"How much?"

"I don't know. The woman can't keep a secret, you know, and so my wife told me about it this morning."

"Wants to get them out of the way as witnesses. Well, I am very much obliged to you. I'll see if we can balk that little game," and Tom hurried to see the district-attorney. Moyer was out on bail, and the trial was to come off in a few days. The district-attorney at once procured warrants for the arrest of Ellis and his wife as absconding witnesses, and placed them in the hands of a detective, to be served in case they tried to leave the city.

That very evening Tom himself entered the car where Ellis and his wife were seated.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, on seeing Ellis. "Where are you off to?"

"Just going to the country on a visit," he said, looking very much confused.

"Why, man, this is no time for you two to leave town. That case comes up on Tuesday next."

"Oh, we'll be back on Saturday," said Ellis.

"Well, you must give bail to make sure of that."

"Bail!"

"Yes; to appear and testify in the Moyer case."

"Oh, I can't give any bail. I guess I have the right to go out of town if I want to."

"Of course, but you must satisfy the judge that you will come back when he wants you to," said Tom.

"This is a free country. I've done no wrong, and——"

"See here, Ellis," said Tom, "where are you going to?"

"To the country."

"Will you let me see your ticket? You know how important it is that you be here on Tuesday."

"You have no right to——"

"I have a warrant for your arrest, Sam Ellis," said the detective, stepping up, and laying a hand on his shoulder. "Also one for you, Mrs. Ellis."

"It's all up, Sam," said Mrs. Ellis. "We can't go."

Ellis was in a rage. He was disposed to resist, but he knew that the fire chief was there to help the detective, and that resistance would be futile.

"Who paid you to leave town, Ellis?" Tom asked, when they were out of the car.

"Nobody paid me."

"I happen to know differently. You'll have to go to jail if you can't give bail."

"Both of us?" Mrs. Ellis asked.

"Yes—you are both witnesses."

"Send for Mr. Moyer, Sam."

"Will you keep your mouth shut?" said Ellis, through clenched teeth.

"She can't give anything away I don't already know, Ellis. Mrs. Moyer put up the money to get you to leave town, only I don't know how much."

"We can give her back the money if you'll keep us out of jail," said the alarmed woman.

"All right—just give the district-attorney the money and tell him all about it, and I'll give bail, or get bail for you," and they both agreed. They were taken to the home of the district-attorney at once and their story taken down, sworn

to, and were permitted to go on their own recognizance, after leaving \$300 in money with him.

The next day Moyer heard of what had taken place, and hurried to see his lawyer about it. The lawyer told him he could give him no advice in the matter without making himself liable to be broken as a lawyer. "But," said he, "there is no law that can compel Ellis and his wife to tell the truth," and Moyer took the hint. He sent his man Snow to see them, give them more money and have them deny that they had seen him in the building a few minutes before the fire broke out.

But Tom had secured a witness of the admissions made by the woman, and was satisfied even to have them go away if they wished to do so.

CHAPTER XX.

A CHARGE OF FORGERY.

When the case of Moyer was called, a formidable array of counsel was on hand to defend him. He was now a thoroughly frightened man. But he had a great deal of money and a large number of friends willing to commit perjury to save him. The prosecution was prepared to push the case with the utmost vigor. One witness swore to having seen him in the building just a few minutes before the fire broke out, with an oil can in his hand—that he came out without it and some three minutes later the fire broke out. Another told where he had bought the oil; another, an insurance man, told of his placing additional insurance on the houses a short time before. Then Sam Ellis was called and he went back on the story he and his wife had told Tom and the district-attorney.

"Your honor," said the attorney, "I would ask the court to inform the witness what the penalty is for perjury on the witness stand."

"It is a state prison offense," said the judge, looking at the prisoner.

The witness was in a panicky condition of mind, and, after contradicting himself several times, broke down and confessed that he had been given money by Snow to swear falsely, and that Mrs. Moyer had paid him and his wife \$300 to leave Barrington before the trial—which money he had turned over to the district-attorney after his arrest.

Moyer's lawyers fought hard to save him, but without avail. He was found guilty. They appealed to a higher court, and he again gave bail, swearing to push Barry to the wall for what he had done. He said he would spend ten thousand dollars to get even with him.

"That's cheap," said Tom, when he heard of the threat. "It may cost him more than that to keep out of prison. I am not afraid of him or his friends."

But Tom little dreamed of the danger to which he was exposed. He little suspected the extent to which Moyer's friends would go to save him. His lawyer appealed, and through a technicality succeeded in getting a new trial. Then they went to work to ruin his character in the city.

A man of the name of Sandlin, who was an intimate friend of Moyer's, gave him a check for one hundred dollars, payable to his order, for the benefit of a Fireman's Fund. He deposited it in his bank in his own name, as the fund had no account at the time. Two days later the cashier of the bank told him that Sandlin had pronounced the check a forgery.

"What! He gave me the check himself!" exclaimed Tom, in very great surprise.

"He says it's a forgery," repeated the cashier, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Well, here's my check to make it good to you to balance up my account," and he wrote it out and signed it.

The next moment he went in search of Sandlin, but failed to find him. That evening he was arrested on the charge of forgery, the warrant was sworn out by Sandlin himself. He gave bail instantly, the mayor himself going on the bond.

"This is an attempt to ruin me," he said to the mayor, "and you are going to hear something very interesting very soon."

"Did you know Sandlin was an intimate friend of Moyer's?"

"No, I did not."

"Well, he is. They have operated in real estate together a good many times."

"That settles it. He came to me and said he wanted to contribute to the Firemen's Fair Fund, and gave me the check. His name was signed to it, and it was made payable to me. I thanked him and gave him a receipt for it in my office."

"Have you a witness to that?"

"No."

"Then he has got you into a corner, I fear."

"Wait till I see him!" and Tom's eyes snapped.

"Violence will only get you into deeper trouble," and the mayor shook his head.

"Yes, I know; but I'll make trouble for him, too."

"I advise you, as a friend, to be extremely careful, Barry. He is a man of means, and has a good reputation as a business man in this community."

"He won't have when I get through with him."

The next day Tom got a friend to go to Sandlin and ask him if it was true that the signature was forged.

"It is a rank forgery," was the reply.

"But Barry says you gave him the check yourself," said the friend.

"That is not true. I did not give him any check."

"That is very strange. Why he should say so, if it is not true, puzzles me."

"I know that I did not sign the check, nor give him one. I understand he says I gave it to him for the Firemen's Fund. Yet he deposited it to his own personal account. Does that puzzle you, too?" and he sneered as he asked the question.

"No. He explains that to my satisfaction."

"You are very easily satisfied then, I fear."

"No. I am satisfied he did not forge your name, though."

"I don't say that he wrote it, but I know that it came to my bank from his, with his name on the back of it. I know that somebody put my name there without my knowledge or consent."

"But he says he gave you a receipt for it, stating what it was for."

"He did nothing of the kind," said Sandlin.

"Will you meet him and——"

"Yes—in the courtroom. I want nothing to do with him."

The friend went away and soon told Tom what Sandlin had said.

Tom was dumfounded at the man's cheek. He saw that the man was going to perjure himself in order to ruin him, and thus destroy his standing as a witness in the Moyer case. He was puzzled to know what to do, and consulted Judge Macomb about it.

"It will be a question of veracity between you and Sandlin," said the judge, "and I think the jury will believe you, as no sane man can believe that you would sell out your good name for the sum of \$100, particularly as you were not in any financial strait at the time."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE TRIAL AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

As a matter of course, the case against the young chief of the fire department attracted a great deal of attention in the city. The friends of Moyer were very active in their efforts to create popular prejudice against him. But Barry's friends were true as steel, and laughed at the charge as absurd.

When the case came up the courthouse was jammed with people eager to hear the evidence. Sandlin swore that he did not give any such check—never signed it—that his name had been forged.

Barry swore that Sandlin gave him the check, and that he gave him a receipt for it, in which he stated that the money was for a contribution to the Firemen's Fund.

"Do you mean to say that Mr. Sandlin has lied in his statement?" Sandlin's lawyer asked him.

"Yes—most emphatically," he replied.

"Why should he do so?"

"Ask him. I don't know."

"He is a man of good reputation," suggested the lawyer.

"I put my reputation for veracity against his. I solemnly swear that he gave me the check, and that I gave him a receipt for it."

"The cashier of his bank says it is not his signature."

"I have not said that it was his signature. I simply say he gave me the check in my office, and that I gave him a receipt for it."

The lawyers spoke strongly, and the judge, in his charge to the jury, said it was simply a question of veracity between the two men which the jury must decide.

The jury did not leave their seats. They consulted a few minutes, and then the foreman said they found the defendant:

"Not guilty!"

Tom sprang to his feet and made a low bow to the jury. Then he looked at Sandlin, and exclaimed:

"You go out of this courtroom branded as a perjurer by a jury of your countrymen!"

Sandlin was white as a sheet, and his lawyer protested against Barry's language.

"Protest as much as you please," said Judge Macomb, "but what he said is true. Sandlin is a ruined man."

The court officers tried to quell the tumult but failed. Barry's friends were there in force, and they made the courthouse ring with their shouts. But the crowd dispersed finally, and quiet was restored. Sandlin and a few friends went over to a hotel, and in the barroom there indulged in divers threats against Barry.

By a strange coincidence Barry and some of his friends repaired to the same place.

"Ah, the perjurer is here!" said Tom, on seeing him.

Sandlin threw off his coat and said:

"Call me a perjurer again and I'll wipe up the floor with you, you lying forger!"

"I repeat it—you are a perjurer, sir!"

They ran together. The friends of both stood back. In less than ten seconds Tom downed him by a blow between the eyes. Then to the amazement of everyone present, Tom took a wallet from Sandlin's pocket, handed it to a prominent citizen, saying:

"I saw him place my receipt in this wallet. Please see if it is there."

The man opened it and made a search of its contents. The receipt was found, written on the letter head official paper of the fire department. He read it to the crowd.

"Put the wallet back into his pocket, but keep that receipt," said Tom, and it was done.

"This is robbery, gentlemen!" sung out one of Sandlin's friends.

"What has he been robbed of?" Tom asked.

"Of his wallet and——"

Tom sprang at him.

"Take that back, sir!" he said. "He has been robbed of nothing, as you well know."

"But you have no right to open his pocketbook," protested another.

"I don't claim that I have, but what do you think of him now?"

Sandlin was here raised to his feet by some of his friends. He was in a dazed condition, and it took some minutes to make him understand what had happened. Then he grew frantic with rage, and swore he would have Barry arrested again for robbery. His friends tried to get him away from the place, and the excitement was so great the room became jammed with the friends of both men.

Finally Tom and his friends got out, and he went at once to the district-attorney's office. There he left the receipt, with an account of how he got hold of it.

An hour later Sandlin was arrested on the charge of perjury. He gave bail, as a matter of course, and from that hour he was a ruined man in the City of Barrington.

The incident created a tremendous excitement in the city. An attempt to have Tom arrested for taking the wallet from

Sandlin's pocket was made, but it failed. Public opinion was in his favor.

"What are you going to do about it, Barry?" the mayor asked him.

"Push him to the wall," was the reply.

"That means State prison."

"Yes, so it does."

"He has a family."

"Yes, but they won't have to go to prison."

"No, but it will always be a blight on them."

"Come now, Mr. Mayor! I am a very charitable sort of person, but that thing is suspended in this case. I am not going to show any sentiments of charity in this matter. It is a deliberate attempt on his part to put me behind the bars. I am going to put him there if the law doesn't lose its grip."

Before the case came up Sandlin's wife came to Tom and said she wanted to settle the matter and let it drop.

"It's in the hands of the district-attorney," he said. "I have nothing to do with it, save to appear as a witness."

"But you can stop it if you will," she pleaded.

"But I don't choose to do so. It was a cold-blooded attempt to ruin me, and I am not going to do anything to save him from the consequences."

She went away and sent her two daughters to see him. They were two very pretty girls, the elder being a very prominent society young lady.

He was very respectful to them, but firmly refused to accede to their request.

"I couldn't stop it if I would," he said, "and would not if I could. It is a case that merits all the penalty of the law. After his conviction I will sign a petition for clemency if you wish me to. He had no sympathy for me. I have none for him."

"But do have some for us," pleaded the girls. "If he is convicted, we will ever afterwards be known as the daughters of a convict. Men can live down such things, but a woman can't," and they burst into tears.

Tom was worried. That was putting it in a new light, and he knew it was only too true.

"If your father will confess the truth in writing, and give me the paper, I'll do all I can to save him," he said to them.

They went away and submitted it to Sandlin. He agreed to do so, and sent his lawyer to see Tom about it.

It was soon arranged and Tom then used his best endeavors to have the matter dropped. When it came up in court it was put off to the next term, to the surprise of a good many people who did not know what it meant. But the time was coming when Tom would bitterly repent that he had yielded to the entreaties of the two beautiful sisters.

CHAPTER XXII.

"THIS IS MY SIDE OF THE FIGHT."

A few weeks after the postponement of the Sandlin case, young Barry called on Minnie Macomb at her house. He had not told her why the case was postponed, as he had no occasion to. But on that evening she said:

"See here, Tom, Marie told me yesterday that Edith Sandlin had said to her the reason why the case was postponed was that you dared not let it go to trial—that facts had been discovered that would acquit her father and place you in a very bad light—that would ruin you, in fact. What does it all mean?"

"Are you sure she said that?" he asked, in amazement.

"I am sure that Marie told me so," she answered.

"Well, that takes my breath away!" he exclaimed.

"Have you breath enough left to tell me about it?"

"Yes, dear," and he did.

"And you have that confession in writing?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Where?"

"In my safe in my office. Edith herself came there and cried and begged so hard I let up on him on condition that he give me that confession in writing."

"Well, Tom, I am coming down to your office to-morrow to see that confession, and bring Edith Sandlin with me."

The next day, true to her word, Minnie called at his office, accompanied by three other young ladies—all of the best society in the city. Marie was with her, and the other young ladies he knew, having met them before. All of them had heard Edith make the statement.

"Let us see it Tom," she said, and he opened his safe and showed it to them. They all four read it.

"This was written by my lawyer," he said, "and signed by him in the presence of his own lawyer, so he can't say it is another forgery."

"You have seen it, girls," said Minnie, "and now I am going to tell you a secret, that you may know why I am bothering myself about it. Tom and I are engaged to be married."

"Oh, my!" all four exclaimed. Then they hugged and kissed her and congratulated Tom. She puckered up her lips at him and he kissed her.

"Girls, I am just too happy to live!" Minnie said. "You don't blame me one bit, do you?"

"No, indeed!" they all three exclaimed.

The three girls told it to their friends that they had seen the confession of Sandlin, and knew that Edith had saved her father only by tearful pleading to a man whom she was elandering. It went like a prairie fire, and the Sandlin girls were cut right and left by the best society in Barrington. Mrs. Sandlin called on Tom to ask if he had shown it to any one.

"Yes—to four young ladies, three of whom had heard your daughter say I dared not let the case go to trial, on account of facts that would ruin me and clear her father. She is to blame, and she alone."

"You have ruined us," she said, her face set hard. "My daughter never said a word against you."

"I will give you the names of the three young ladies who say they heard her make the statement. I cannot believe they have lied to me. I am sorry for you and your daughters, but it seems hard for your family to let me alone. All this

is the result of mean attempts to ruin me. I disclaim all responsibility for any part of it."

A few weeks later the Sandlins went on a trip to Europe and the matter quieted down. Barry had won against the man, and Minnie against the woman. But both had made an implacable enemy. The Moyers had more fight in them, and more friends than the Sandlins had. As that case was to be tried over again, that matter was not settled.

In the meantime Tom was vigilant in the discharge of all the duties of his office. He had won all the members of No. 1 by his strict impartiality and the respect shown to every fireman who came about him.

One day Minnie Macomb came to him and said:

"I've just had a big row with mother. She has heard that we were engaged, and is just frantic about it. Says she'd rather see me dead than married to a man with no family record in Barrington, and all that."

"What's to be done?" Tom asked her, when she was through.

"Marry at once," she said; "I've had one of my houses furnished for our use."

"Very well—say when."

"Right now."

"Do you mean it?"

"Yes, I want to let mother see that I am old enough to do as I please. I'll go after Marie and the other two girls who know of the engagement, bring them here and let the mayor tie the knot."

"Very well. I'll see the mayor and have him ready by the time you get back," and he escorted her out to her carriage and saw her go away. Then he hurried to the mayor's office, and told him a young couple wanted him to marry them within an hour or two.

"Very good," said the mayor. "I like to make young people happy. Bring 'em along," and Tom returned to his office to make ready himself.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A HAPPY MARRIAGE.

When he returned to his office, Tom was surprised at finding Judge Macomb there. He seemed to be in a very stern mood, but returned Tom's greeting in kind.

"Tom, I want to have a private talk with you," the judge said. "Can I take your time for a few minutes?"

"Certainly, judge. Come into the other room," and he led the way into a little office in the rear of the main one, where they took seats. "Now go ahead."

"It is a delicate matter," said the judge. "In fact, it's a family matter. My wife heard rumors last night that you and Minnie were engaged, and this morning she attacked Minnie in such a way about it that a very stormy scene ensued. Minnie, angry at her mother's furious attack, would neither affirm nor deny the truth of the rumor. I have come

to you for the truth, knowing you to be an honorable man."

"It is true, judge," said Tom.

"I suspected it for some time," continued the judge. "I have no objections myself to you, but the mother is a born aristocrat, and will never consent to the marriage. I am not one who believes in ruining a girl's happiness for any cause whatever. Let me suggest you cease attention to her for the present, and——"

"Judge, let me tell you something. Minnie will be here within an hour, with three other young ladies, when we are to be married by the mayor."

The judge gasped.

"She told me about the row with her mother and demanded that we be married at once. I could not do otherwise. Let me add that I have not tried to presume on my rescue of her life; on the contrary, have tried to avoid meeting her. She did not pursue me. It was simply our fate and deathless love for each other."

"Yes, yes—naturally. The best solution of the trouble is to marry at once. But where will you take her?"

"Oh, she has had one of her houses furnished for us."

"The sly puss is too much for her mother," and he shook his head. "I am sorry, though, it could not take place at my home."

"So am I. My idea was to wait till I was of age and admitted to the bar, but circumstances have hastened matters."

"Yes, she has precipitated the very thing she wished to prevent."

The judge waited there nearly an hour in the little office. When Minnie and her three friends came in they did not see him. Tom told her about it, and she ran, threw her arms about her father's neck, kissed him and said:

"Don't blame me, father. I am the one whose happiness is concerned. Society will not drop me on Tom's account. Even if it did, it would not matter—I am satisfied. Tom has the stuff in him to win his way in the world."

"Yes, yes. I told him I had no objection to him myself. I am going to stand by you and take the consequences at home."

He went with them before the mayor and saw them united in the holy bonds of matrimony, and just as the last word was spoken the great fire bell rang out an alarm.

Quick as a flash Tom snatched a kiss from his bride, and said:

"I'll come to you as soon as the danger is over, dear," and then bounded away.

"That's the last fire he shall run to," she said, looking up at the mayor. "I'll be fire enough for him after this," and the mayor, the judge and the three bridesmaids laughed heartily, kissed her and wished her all the happiness in the world.

"But you should not deprive the city of so valuable a man," the mayor said to her.

"The city can do without him, I can't," she replied, and then she returned to her carriage, accompanied by her father and friends. They were driven to the house, and the judge

was dumfounded at the way she had furnished it without his knowledge.

She danced through the rooms and showed them everything. Even the servants had been engaged, and had been sent for. She told the three girls they must stay there with her till Tom came back from the fire, and they agreed to do so.

"Then I'll go home and console your mother," said her father.

"Well, tell her I am happy," said the bride, "and that I shall always be at home to her."

Tom hurried to the fire and found that it was a serious one, an entire block being threatened with destruction. He had to call out all the fire companies in order to stem the tide of conflagration. He directed every move against it and succeeded in finally extinguishing the flames. Then he went home to his bride where he found the young ladies waiting.

The next day the papers were full of the romantic marriage. They retold the story of his heroic rescue of the girl whom he had married, and wove a web of romance about them that was deeply interesting to all the young people of Barrington.

Mrs. Macomb would not forgive her daughter for a long time. But society paid the young couple such marked attention she began to see her mistake. So one day she called and a reconciliation took place.

Tom resigned his position as chief of the fire department, and was soon admitted to the bar. The firemen, however, insisted on his membership being kept up, and he never resigned it.

When the new hall for No. 4 was finished Tom had to open it with a speech, at which all the firemen in the city were present. He made a deep impression upon all who heard him, and many said he was a born orator.

The new trial of the Moyer case came up soon after he was admitted to the bar, and the young lawyer was again a witness. He made exactly the same case as on the first trial, and the jury again brought in a verdict of guilty.

He appealed to a higher court. A man with money can prolong his case for years in almost any court in the land, and his was no exception to the rule. But the insurance company had money, too, and that made it very bad for the defendant.

The very day he appealed the case, the insurance company made Tom an offer to act as one of its counsel in the future, paying him a regular salary to act for them in any litigation that might come up. That was a recognition of talent that was very flattering, as such institutions employed none but the best lawyers that could be had.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

A year passed and Tom was the father of a bouncing boy. On hearing of the birth of the boy the members of No. 4 elected him an honorary member, under the name of "Tom

Barry, of Barrington." Tom went down to the company's quarters and made them a speech. When little Tom was one year old the company gave him a birthday party in their hall, and he and his mother were present. Several of her friends accompanied her.

"I expect to remain a friend of all firemen as long as I live," said the happy mother to the boys, "for I know how well they deserve the good will and friendship of the women and children of the city."

Soon after that event one of the firemen of No. 4 married Maggie Morrison. The company insisted on the marriage taking place in the company hall. They had a big crowd, and the dancing went on till midnight. Tom and his wife went down there and made them a present of a check for five hundred dollars.

"You've got a prize, Jerry," Tom said to the happy groom. "I lived in her mother's house four years, and know that she is a good girl—one of the very best—and that she deserves a good husband. If you don't treat her right I'll give you the best thrashing you ever had. This check is hers. She can give it to you if she wishes to do so. As long as she and you live, Tom Barry is your friend."

No wonder the firemen loved him. He was a rising young lawyer, with a very rich wife, yet he came to them on all occasions, and mingled with them as in the old days when he was working in the cabinet shop.

One day a member of No. 4 suggested that he run for mayor.

"Boys," he said, "I won't do it. I am too young."

"Oh, you go 'long," they said. "We are going to put you up and elect you."

They went to work to agitate, and all the firemen in the city supported him to a man. The young men in every walk of life rallied around him. An old merchant ran against him, but was beaten two to one. He was mayor ere he was twenty-two years old, and the fire department never had such a friend in the mayor's chair before. It was literally a fireman's administration.

When his term expired, he was elected again without opposition, as no one had any fault to find with him. Whenever a fire broke out, he went to see that it was properly handled by the firemen; and when a fireman performed an act of heroism, he was prompt to give him credit for it.

Of course such a mayor could not be beaten if he wanted to be elected. The citizens were satisfied to keep him there as long as he would serve. But he said he would serve them one term, then give away to someone else. So he served a third term and declined to run again. His law practice demanded more of his time.

One night he went to the fire, accompanied by the chief of the fire department, and saw a young tough stick a knife into the hose of No. 1. He left his buggy and went for the young villain, who was about twenty years old and a hard case.

The young tough aimed a vicious blow at his face. Tom parried it and sent him to grass. Instantly a half score of young ruffians attacked him on all sides. They tore his coat off his back in the struggle, but when the police and firemen

rushed to his assistance six of his assailants were lying on the ground, utterly knocked out.

They were gathered in and locked up. The others escaped, but were caught the next day, and all had to do three months' time for their fun.

"His honor is an old No. 4 boy yet," said the firemen when the melee was over.

But ere he had been one year out of the office he was nominated for Congress, to his very great surprise. The convention had met in Barrington and tried to nominate a certain politician. He had a strong party against him, hence a great wrangle in the convention. Someone proposed Tom Barry's nomination. Instantly the wildest enthusiasm ensued. They saw that he was popular and so the nomination was made.

Minnie was as much astonished as he was when she heard it; and when he thought of declining it, she urged him to accept it. She was ambitious and wanted him to place himself where his influence would go out into the State.

He accepted it and at once took the field. His party was in the minority outside the city, and he had a hard fight ahead of him. But he captured the crowd wherever he spoke, and great enthusiasm followed him all over the district. When the votes were counted he was elected by a big majority. The firemen at Barrington paraded the streets nearly all night, singing songs and shouting their joy over the triumph of their comrade.

He served the term with such credit to his State that he was unanimously renominated and re-elected. His wife and three children spent the winters in Washington with him, and he never made a speech unless she was in the gallery to hear him.

When he had served out the two terms he refused to stand again, saying he wished to practice law. But the people would not have it that way. They nominated him for governor and forced him to run. He was elected, solely because of the admiration of the people for his record as a boy fireman. His party flooded the State with descriptions of his daring rescues, and they won old and young.

This ends the story of a remarkable career. The man or boy who tries to do right, stands up for the right at all times, and seeks to serve others while doing so, has a friend in the people all the days of his life.

THE END.

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